

---

TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

---

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

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

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

The House met at 10:00.

The Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Good morning, hon members.

Give me one moment. I have to announce that due to the loss of the membership of Mr P T De Villiers of the GOOD Party, a vacancy occurred in the representation of the GOOD Party in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. This vacancy has since been filled by the nomination of Ms S Little, with effect from 25 March 2024. Ms S Little was sworn in, in my office, on 25 March 2024. Hon members, please allow me an opportunity to welcome hon Little to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament.

Hon members, as has been our practice to date... Order, members!

Hon members, as has been our practice to date, hon members will participate in this Sitting of the House both here from the Chamber with the Presiding Officer and the Table staff and via Microsoft Teams. Our Standing Rules have accordingly been amended to accommodate such hybrid Sittings.

Hon members, if you are experiencing challenges in connecting to the Sitting you are requested to contact the WCPP ICT colleagues who will assist to resolve your connectivity issues.

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

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

The Serjeant-at-Arms has recorded members' attendance.

Hon members, the media have also been granted access to the MS Teams meeting as guests of the WCPP. However, I wish to remind the members of the press that they may not use the chat room or speak or activate their cameras while the Sitting is in progress.

Hon members, as normal, Language Translation Services are available in the Chamber and via MS Teams via the respective channels. Hon members participating in the Sitting of the House must please access the Language Translation Services via a second device and if you have earphones available please use them for the language translation.

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

Hon members, I am going to ask the Secretary to read the first Order of the Day.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 1: Premier – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2024]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Premier, Premier Winde.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. Hon Speaker, to you, to my Cabinet colleagues, to the Leader of the Opposition, to the hon members of this House, and also allow me, to the newest member of this House, welcome! To the DG and all of the officials of the Department of the Premier, to all the officials in our Government actually, to distinguished guests. Those of you up in the gallery, thank you very much for being here and of course to the citizens of this province.

We are at the end of our term. Yesterday was the last Second Reading Debate in this House. You can feel that we are moving to an election, if you listen to the comments and interjections, the excitement in the room or could I say the tension in the room. Of course it is the time that the citizens make choices again but it was also the last of many things and this being the last...  
[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: But why does it...

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

The PREMIER: ...this being the last tabling of the Budget of this term for the Department of the Premier. It is my privilege to table this Budget, the 2024 Budget and, Speaker, I must start off by talking about dignity. Deepening dignity underpins all that we do. It is the foundation of our Government's pledges and priorities. Dignity is about being able to walk in your

neighbourhood without fear of being gunned down in a gang-shooting. Dignity is about having a job to provide for your family, to put food on your table. That is real dignity. Dignity must be offered through a healthcare system that is responsive and caring. Dignity means being able to send your children to school, knowing that they will receive a quality education, that prepares them to become economically active citizens who can add to our shared success and vision, to enable them to lead dignified lives, and to be a better future.

Speaker, we are also entering a new digital age. Our digital and technology capabilities are an extension of the services that we offer. We are further empowering and enabling our citizens, preparing them for the future. Innovation is also a core value in our Government, one which we are leveraging across departments to improve services.

The Western Cape Government has rolled out more than 1600 public WiFi hotspots across this province with six gigabytes of free data per device offered to citizens. Since 2019 the Western Cape e-Centres have become as much a part of our neighbourhoods as your local spaza shop or eating spot or your school or clinic and we have rolled out more than 70 of these computer and internet centres.

Residents are fully utilising these resources, more than two million sessions were logged at our e-Centres between 2019 and 2024. At our e-Centres young people can use the internet to search for jobs. They are assisted by trained staff to draw up CVs. They can then email these CVs to prospective employers

and can print copies for free and of course once they get an interview they could utilise a voucher that has now been rolled out to get to that interview.

Soon we will be able to take our services on the road literally. In the coming days we are launching our new mobile e-Centre Bus which will bring our services closer to our citizens, specifically in far-flung rural communities.

Speaker, we should not teach technology but rather embrace it, specifically the likes of Artificial Intelligence. We cannot avoid AI. To ignore its benefits would be tantamount to ignoring reality and the demands and needs of our fast-growing economy and province. The Department of the Premier's Main Budget in this Budget Book for 2024/25 this year is for just slightly over R2 billion. Compared to the 2023/24 Budget the overall budget decreases by 1,78%. Of course, that decrease comes from a projected lesser spend in the Broadband Project as we move to broadband 2.0. It also is as a result of us having to cut, I think everyone knows that our Government has had to cut across every single department, but Speaker, despite the constrained fiscal environment we are turning over every rand in service of our citizens.

Our Department is investing in the following interventions that will be either initiated or up-scaled for greater impact: the consolidating of Broadband 1.0 Service and finalising procurement for the Broadband 2.0 Service and transitioning between the contracts with minimal disruption to network service. The Department connects and provides ICT services to more than 28 000 corporate and health users, as well as connectivity to close to 1,2 million

learners in our schools.

It will be for the developing of a policy guideline and road map for the utilisation of AI technologies in the Western Cape Government, for strengthening our cyber security measures, for consolidating and enhancing the new Digital Experience Platform, DXP, to replace the current Western Cape Government Portal.

Expanding and optimising our cloud services and continuing to enable and implement and support digital transformation across our Government.

This is a government that encourages friendly competition, whether it is amongst departments or our employees or municipalities, a healthy sense of competition leads to innovation as well as self reflection. We must consistently assess how we are faring, and we must always strive to do better, to keep up at Western Cape or to keep up with the Western Cape Government and to keep us on our toes. We strongly believe in ongoing training and education, and I am therefore happy to report that the reconfiguration of our Provincial Training Institute to become an innovation hub with a refreshed curriculum is progressing well. This reconfiguration process will enable greater collaboration with partners and with stakeholders. Our province and country are still plagued with this, or the current energy crisis.

For over 15 years relentless loadshedding has severely hampered our growth potential. Our economy continues to bleed tens of millions of rand every single

day while rolling power cuts remain a disastrous reality. Since loadshedding started, we have lost between R49 billion and R61 billion in real GDP and counting, and tracking this crisis with the urgency it deserves, going beyond our mandate to add more megawatts to our power system. I think everyone is aware of the 5 700 megawatts in this plan and of course led ably by Mr Alwie Lester.

Over the current Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the Department of the Premier is ploughing in R103,4 million to help respond to this energy crisis. The Western Cape Energy Resilience program, driven by the Energy Council, remains focused on the following interventions.

**Demand Side Management Programme:** this program will focus on supporting municipalities to design and implement Demand Side Management measures at scale.

Communicating campaigns to remind and help the public understand how they need to save electricity, promote and use energy-efficient products and services by Government, citizens and businesses, and pilot the Load Management System to assist in managing power usage during peak hours.

We also have the Emergency Relief Packs. 96 000 Emergency Loadshedding Relief Packs will be provided to indigent households and of course 4 000 we know went to the households as identified by the Department of Social Development, specifically focusing on GBV Shelters and our elderly; the rest



primarily going to households via our education processes linking to lower quintiles in our education system, so that our education progress and catch-up, etcetera, can continue and we can make sure that we do not disadvantage our younger people as we move forward and growing that very economy that I spoke about in the introductory remarks.

Our Municipal Pool Buying System to continue with further due diligence, and establish a market operator mechanism to enable municipalities to make an in-principle decision to warrant the formal establishment of a facility. The facility would be aimed at reducing the risks and costs of renewable energy, independent power producers and procurement and at the moment we have around about 2 000 megawatts in the pipeline across all of our municipalities this year alone.

The development of the Western Cape Integrated Resource Plan, of course we need to have a Resource Plan so that we can give clear indication to the economy of exactly what that mix looks like, how we are going to target and enable this energy infrastructure development and investment.

Of course we also want to thank the USAID Programme for helping us and funding towards the finalisation of this program; outsourcing our core energy team, also to coordinate and manage the initiatives of our energy resilience programme including resourcing specialists and specialist skills, not only for the province but to enable our local governments across this province.

Speaker, I must say that I am humbly honoured to serve our citizens. Everything we do is to offer you, the residents, in our region an environment where your dignity is upheld and protected to enable you to unlock our potential and become part of the success story of the Western Cape. It is through our residents that we can sustain an upward trajectory of our economy, and by encouraging our economic growth in products, development and making sure that we work tirelessly with the citizens and partners across this province, in service of our citizens for building and enabling a better province.

Speaker, when you table a budget like this, I must think of our Western Cape Government family, the 90 000 people who worked for this Government in service of our citizens. They are the invaluable interlocutors who make sure that these services are delivered, that we build this better province and when I think about the programmes that this Department offers and the role that the Department of the Premier plays, it is really important to just understand the magnitude of this Department called the Department of the Premier.

I think it is centred in people management and there just yesterday I received a report from the Public Service Commission and, you know, the Public Service Commission sometimes acts because people ask them to investigate something, but sometimes they also do independent investigations. They call it "own-accord investigations" and I got a report yesterday of an own-accord investigation that they did into the people management systems. This is a

review of our recruitment and selection processes and I am happy to say that we got 100% fully compliant and that really goes a long way, and I must thank everyone in the People Management Team for the work that they do in how we recruit and how we build that team of 90 000 officials across this province.

I must also commend them for our culture journey and the Topco Competition that we entered into, and in the first entry, how we were recognised alongside 1 400 other businesses in the private sector across the African continent, and we are now in a global competition at the best place to work in the world.

I must also think or I also think about the Data Management Team, the ICT and Tech Team and Now AI Team. I think about the Corporate Assurance Team in the role that they play in identifying risks in our system and making sure that or giving us that assurance that our business is running properly. The Corporate Communications Team and I think about the role that they play in making sure that we are getting our communications out, but also being receptive to those citizens.

I think about First Thursdays and the thousands and thousands of citizens who have personally taken the time to come and engage with our Government. Every First Thursday they come and do so and I want to thank there the team that puts that First Thursdays together, the team that is responsive in making sure you take the detail in to go and work with that good idea or to go and fix that problem that is being raised.

I think about the Call Centre and those citizens who call directly in and having a look at the 1,4 million or over 1,4 million tickets that have been registered over this term. These are cases that are registered with the system and taken to fruition, and they are well above 90% conclusion rate.

I think of the Policy and Strategy Team and of course in an evolving ecosystem, the pressure, not only climate change grey-listing, other economic pressures; ports and rail systems that are not working, how policy and strategy has to respond all the time.

I think about the Monitoring and Evaluation Team and thank them for what they are doing, because if we do not monitor, if we do not measure, if we do not evaluate, we cannot manage.

I think about the International Relations Team and the role that they play in how we grow our economy and how we position ourselves as a government to the world and how we welcome the world when they come to this province.

I think of the PDIA Team and how they have embedded PDIA into our everyday work. I think of the Innovation Team and how we embrace innovation to make sure that we better our Government every single day. We innovate and you cannot keep doing the same thing over and over again and expect a different outcome. You have to innovate and you have to change. You have to test and you have to trial.

I think about the team that runs the Mancos, the Management Committees, the Committees of Cabinet, the team that enables and helps our Cabinet to run efficiently, the team that runs the ETMs and the Management Systems within our Government. I think about the teams that run the PCFs and how we engage with our municipalities or the team that enables the DG and myself to play a part in the national platforms; the PCCs and the Lekgotlas.

I think about the Energy Team. This DOTP Team is an amazing team that is responsible for the call of Government, is responsible for making sure that we hold it all together and for them I want to say thank you very much for everything that they do day and night to make sure that this Government offers better services to its citizens.

Lastly, I want to say to my own office, to my own office who is also there day and night, making sure that we are responsive to the citizens, making sure that we are holding it all together and giving me all the support that I need. I really do value that support day and night.

I think of my family and I want to thank them as well for the support that they give or have given over this last term.

Speaker, it is an honour to be able to at this last opportunity in the last budget cycle of this term, to table this just over R2 billion Budget for debate here and for – I really hope – passing of this budget, remembering that this Province still is the only government in South Africa that deals with their budgets that

brings them to Parliament, that enables this process before the end of the financial year and I want to commend everybody who enables that because we can be proud of so many things that we do and achieve in this province and this is another one of them, the only province in South Africa to do so, to pass and enable its budgets before the end of the financial year, I thank you.  
[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. I now recognise hon Dugmore.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, Speaker. It is good to have you back after the rather painful experience we experienced yesterday with your Deputy, so thanks for being here.  
[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Come-on!

An HON MEMBER: Ag shame!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: I want to say that I find it interesting that the Premier started off his speech talking about dignity because, Speaker, I mentioned yesterday in the Second Reading Debate the fact that in the five years that this Premier has been Premier of the Western Cape, there has been absolutely no attempt to, in an ongoing way, build a culture of supporting human rights and one of the... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore, my apologies for interrupting you. Can I please ask members and members in the gallery to please put your cell phones on silent to ensure that we do not interrupt the speaker on the floor, please.

An HON MEMBER: Hon Dugmore's phone?

The SPEAKER: That was not member's Dugmore's phone. Hon Dugmore you may continue.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you. So to build a culture of dignity and respect for human rights, whether there are human rights in this province or human rights of people around the world, you actually have to work at it and that is the responsibility of the highest office in this Province, the Department of the Premier, and we noticed, for instance, that when talking about dignity and one looks at the incidences of racism and sexism at the University of Stellenbosch, to use one example, where a young black student had his laptop urinated upon, various other incidences of sexual harassment, this Premier and this Administration have been absolutely silent on what is essential to the issue of dignity. When a young woman who is a supporter of the struggle of the Palestinian people simply had a Palestinian flag stuck in her car and was attacked in an incident of road rage and her car damaged in Waterkant, close to where we are here. Once again, the issue of the dignity, the right of freedom of expression, this Premier and this Government had been absolutely silent and maybe the Premier through the Speaker does not realise

it, but if you fail to build that culture of respect and dignity across race, across religion, across culture, that actually begins to create a particular perception of this Government as being one that defends the rights of certain people. If you follow a particular religion, if you have a particular colour to your skin, if you are poor, if you are rich, and that reality of this Provincial Government who would rather defend the beneficiaries of apartheid and colonialism, who offend, insult and are racist in many cases towards those very victims, you begin to have a perception developing around you and it is not surprising that the Premier, when he spoke here today, essentially made a swan-song speech. You could hear, you know, the "thank yous" and so on. It is very clear that in his own heart, he does not believe that he is coming back as the Premier to this particular Province. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes, I am coming back, that is clear.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: So that was the one issue and then you would remember, Speaker, that during COVID this Premier made a promise that this Provincial Government would produce a vaccine. Absolutely nothing happened from that promise and yet again he stands up in the Legislature the other week and again today, and he promises as he did in



the Committee, 5 700 megawatts of power and when he was pressed in the Standing Committee, Speaker, to say when will this power become available, he initially could not respond and then he said between 18 months and 24 months. So he is not committing to a date, like he refused to commit to a date in regard to vaccines. So once again it is a promise of this Premier, which is actually detached from reality because the most important thing actually, which he also could not respond to and that is another reason why the ANC rejects this particular Vote, he could not tell us how much this power – this 5 700 megawatts of power – is actually going to cost the consumer and he simply said, in his view “he thinks”. He thinks that it will be competitive, that was the way that he responded to this question. So in other words, in his own admission, over 103 million in this financial year alone, let aside the over 300 million that is being spent on the so-called energy resilience strategy for three years, since three years. They cannot answer the question as to how much this energy would cost, and that reveals a lot about who the Premier serves.

If you have energy and your wealth, you do not mind what is the cost of that particular energy, but we have shown proof in this House by conducting an experiment by going to the inner City to those areas provided by Eskom, taking a R100 and buying electricity and that R100 from Eskom gets you 44 units, but when you take the same R100 and you buy from the DA in the City, you get 22 units. Now why is that? That is because the City of Cape Town, in addition to putting a surcharge above the NERSA charge has also introduced other charges, which actually makes the electricity provided by the City more expensive than Eskom and this is the DA and we need to remember that, that they are actually

forcing people to pay more for electricity than Eskom itself and then we have this bizarre situation – my colleague hon Windvogel knows more about this – but essentially you have a resistance and an uprising against, I believe it is the Cape Agulhas Municipality, who literally wants to tax everyone literally a "sun tax" as the newspaper referred to it, and even this MEC, Speaker ...  
[Interjection.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Listen!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...who is now chatting to the Premier, he is embarrassed about what his municipality is doing there because the surcharge that they are putting above or imposing on every particular ratepayer there is creating major problems.

Now I also want to say and, you know, add a word of welcome to hon member Little, I think the only – I just hope, member Little, that you come back later this year and continue to make a contribution but we do know hon member Little as a very hard-working councillor, someone connected to her community and I am sure that she will add immense value to this House.

Now, Speaker, I also want to say to the House that at 11:30 this morning we will be leading a press conference to actually announce that yesterday we formally submitted a PAIA application to the DA Information Officer and for those DA members who are not aware, that Information Officer is none other than the Federal Chairperson, Helen Zille, and proof of that PAIA Application

will be provided because yesterday at the DA's press conference, when a colleague, Kgosi Maepa, indicated that John Steenhuisen, the DA leader, denied having received a similar PAIA application or that he had not submitted it a full four weeks ago, because today in Tshwane is the deadline by which hon Helen Zille needs to respond, so that application was submitted yesterday and the reason that I am mentioning this, Premier, is for the following, because we sent a letter. You see it is difficult to keep track, Speaker, on who actually leads the DA, because when one Albert Fritz was still the leader, we sent a letter to him asking to give us all the so-called cadre deployment records and he did not provide that. He did not even respond and then the hon Simmers who then was acting, he was in this House given a similar letter and up until today, he has never responded. [Interjections.]

The CHIEF WHIP: Talk to the budget.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Now in this, hon member and Premier, I am raising this point, Speaker, because the Premier's Department, as the member said, has a responsibility... [Interjections.]

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

The CHIEF WHIP: Hon Speaker, can the hon Leader of the Opposition please speak to... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Is that a point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP: Yes, to relevance, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am listening very carefully and the hon Dugmore is expanding on dignity as referred to by the Premier in his address to the House, so I am listening very carefully. Hon member Dugmore, please just note that you must bring it back to the Budget.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you. No, I am saying so not only because of dignity, Speaker, but because of the fact that the Department of the Premier, as we all know, has a transversal responsibility for the appointment of public servants and if you are a public servant and you have a particular qualification and you get denied that appointment because the DA somewhere in some corner has decided who should get that job, and, you know, when we initially raised this issue, Helen Zille, the Supreme Leader, indicated that it was all Mmusi Maimane's fault in terms of the so-called deployment because he introduced it, and now it has stopped, but I would like to bring to the attention of the Premier and ask that he responds to this, the following. That there is a Chief Director who was appointed to the Department that is headed by hon Simmers and it is important for the Premier to tell us when was this position of Chief Director actually advertised? When did the Department actually hold the interviews and who were the shortlisted candidates because the reality is that this is another classic case of DA cadre deployment and the Premier's Department has the Chief Director that was then appointed in the place of Jackie Samson, is someone called Camilla August. [Interjection.]

Now when you go through a process like that – no, your MEC is sitting there, you are supposed to as the Premier...

The SPEAKER: Order, members. Hon Dugmore, please speak to me.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Okay, through you, so what we are having in this Department is the collapse of the Project Management Office, terminating contracts including the managers of this component, and this is bad for governance. It is bad for what the Premier has said that his particular Government has achieved because here you have someone else as opposed to a proper system of filling public service appointments, someone being appointed in an unprocedural way, in fact a DA deployment.

Now last week, Speaker, the Annual World Happiness Report was released and this is a report which indicates the happiness of people within their countries across the globe and reading the report it is clear that we need to commend our President Ramaphosa and his Administration, given that South Africa has moved from being number 106 in 2019 to number 83 this year. So despite the negativity from the Provincial Government and those desperate, and we know they are going to fail from keeping the ANC winning an overall above 50% majority on 29 May, despite all the negativity, South Africans are in fact happier today than they were five years ago. It is just a pity that this World Happiness Index does not zoom into provinces because we are almost certain that the majority of the people of this province are not happier than they were

five years ago. They are not happy because this Provincial Government, like this budget, does not make all of our people happy, and this is a budget for the few. It is a budget for the few because this Department in particular gives scant regard to representivity, and if you are trying to build inclusivity and the feeling of well-being, every citizen in this province should feel they have a fair chance of being represented in the Administration but the very Department that the Premier leads, Speaker, is the most unrepresentative Department of the people of this province with only two out of 65 senior directors who are African and although the Coloured population in this province makes up 48%, they are underrepresented in this particular Department.

So, wellbeing and inclusivity also means feeling that you have a stake in this Provincial Government and when we asked in the Annual Performance Plan, which is another reason why we are not supporting this budget, why the plan does not make clear its proposals to address this lack of representivity, all, Speaker, the Premier said in response: "I agree," but he did not actually address the issues.

In fact, I will tell you what the Premier does not agree with. He does not agree with the importance of addressing the injustices of the past as espoused by our Constitution and our laws to promulgate employment equity. It is not surprising that the Premier's party has voted against the Public Procurement Bill, which attempts to do that, against the Expropriation Bill, which attempts to do that, and that is why the eyes of the people of this province have opened and they no longer believe the spin of this Premier because in reality ownership of assets

of land and housing in the historically disadvantaged communities in this province, under his leadership as the Premier, is completely out of sync with the actual population of our province.

But, in fact it was his Director-General to his credit, who said that he does not agree with the fact that the employment equity stats are as they are and that they are unacceptable, so the DG said that it is not acceptable, but the Premier does not agree that the facts and figures, especially in senior management, does not reflect the demographics of this province. He simply does not see it as an issue, as a problem, and that is where he is missing how that insults the dignity of capable public servants from all groups, White, African, Coloured, Indian, women and men. That is actually an insult to their dignity and the reality is there is no plan because the DG referred to the figures and description of employment equity in the Annual Performance Plan but unfortunately neither the DG nor obviously the Premier could then from the APP point out that this is in fact the Department's ... [Interjections.]

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

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: So the reality is that this particular Premier has presided over a province which has excluded the hopes and aspirations of the majority of its residents. [Time expired.] [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Dugmore. I now recognise the hon Cassiem. Hon Cassiem is on the virtual platform.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the mission of the Premier's Office was to lead a capable Western Cape Government and to make sure that each and every department under its watch performs when it comes to service delivery, but this particular DA Premier, Speaker, has been failing on that together with all members of the Provincial Executive. When he introduced the Safety Plan, Speaker, it was meant to tackle crime and to drastically reduce murder rates in the province. However, despite millions of taxpayer's monies having gone to waste to date, crime in the province remains the same, with the failure, and of the so-called Safety Plan.

Since the beginning of the Premier's term, Speaker, the South African National Crime Statistics Quarterly Report also shows that crime in the province has since become worse, from one term to another. If this Premier is to make an honest self reflection regarding his term, which is... [Connection lost]

The SPEAKER: Hon Cassiem, we have lost you.

Ms A CASSIEM: Sorry, it is my signal. Let me just continue. If the Premier is to make an honest self reflection regarding this term which is coming to an end, then he would admit, Speaker, that his Administration has failed to deal with crime. His interdepartmental whole-of-society approach in dealing with crime in this province was nothing but a shame and, Speaker, on 29 May 2024 the people of this province must vote out this DA so that the province can be



led by those who will make it safe. [Applause.]

Speaker, it makes no sense for a Provincial Government to watch from a distance as gangs demand housing tenders by force, using violence and continuing to extort money from businesses in this province.

Under this Premier's term we had members of his Executive who lied about qualifications, which is a crime under this National Qualification Framework Amendment Act and the Office of the Premier could not pick that up, Speaker.

Another member of his Executive was also internally investigated and found guilty of sexual misconduct against junior staff in his Department. All of this took place under the Premier's watch and during his term, so all of this, Speaker, points that crime is active within the DA and that is why they are unable to fight it within their own ranks in Government and in this province at large.

Speaker, every Department under this Premier's watch has been failing, even the Infrastructure Department remains with a housing backlog which never reduces.

The Department of Education is failing when it comes to learner placement and the provincial Matric passing rate, whether we like it or not, produced poor results during this five-year term compared to other provinces.

The number of homeless people, Speaker, continues to grow and instead the Department of Social Development... [inaudible, connection lost] ...shelter for these people. The Provincial Government, together with the City of Cape Town are always running to court to obtain eviction orders against them. So, in conclusion, Speaker, the office has been nothing but a failure, and therefore we reject this budget.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Cassiem. I recognise the hon Fry.

Mr T FRY: Hon Speaker, in that cult movie, *Pulp Fiction*, it was Pitt who was ably played by Samuel L Jackson to come up with that wonderful line in all of movie history: "Allow me to retort."

As we begin this Budget Speech Debate today, let us take a moment to frame the question before us. South Africa is facing an unprecedented economic and fiscal crisis. The country has recently avoided a technical recession, but only barely, and while every economic indicator we have points to serious trouble, the Gini coefficient on a national level has remained stubbornly high at 0,676 which is the highest in the world.

Youth unemployment now stands at 44,3%, in Quarter 4 2023 in relation to Quarter 4 2022, which is also the highest in the world, and I would challenge member Dugmore to go ask those people who are unemployed if they are happy.

One of the bedrocks of any economy is a stable, reliable electricity supply, and

this has been non-existent. What is it, we ask ourselves?

Loadshedding has plagued South Africa for over 15 years and has increased in its severity, reaching Stage 6 on many an occasion, including directly after the President's State of the Nation Address, during which he reassured us that we had turned the corner on the energy crisis. Speaker, 2023 alone saw 300 days of power cuts. Our country is sick and it is not getting better.

Things in the Western Cape are, as always, better, but we face the same strong headwinds that blow down from the incompetent and ineffective ANC National Government in Tshwane. In-year budget cuts have meant that crucial service delivery is under serious threat. Many departments have had to make sacrifices to ensure that basic services continue... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: You appoint body-builders.

Mr T FRY: ...and as we all know, the Western Cape Government has been forced to declare an intergovernmental dispute to recover the R1,1 billion from the National Treasury that is rightfully theirs.

When facing the doom and gloom that dominates the short and medium outlook in this country we cannot give in to despondency. [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: We are

nowhere, number 64. That is the problem.

Mr T FRY: We refuse to give up but the question that must be asked of us is what can we do? [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Christopher, why did they [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order members!

Mr T FRY: The answer is – we must lead the way. Here in the Western Cape there is at least still hope. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: They made you do this Bill... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr T FRY: This is what 250 000 people every year migrate to our province for. This is why 66% of all jobs created during this term were created in the Western Cape. [Interjections.]

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: A racist party.

Mr T FRY: This is why we reacted to the devastating floods faster than any other province by repairing damaged road infrastructure as quickly as was

humanly possible. This is why more classrooms are being built at a faster rate than ever before, and this is why we are making progress in halving the murder rate and to the citizens of the Western Cape, this is all done to create that hope for you. We in the DA will not rest until we have created the quality of life that you deserve in the Western Cape and across South Africa.

Hon Speaker, I would like to focus on a few aspects in which we can lead the way. The first and most notable way in which this Government is leading the way is the Western Cape Government's response to the energy crisis. This Government is leading the way by making R103,5 million in this financial year available to address it. This Government is taking the strides to do this by implementing the Demand Side Management Programme, focusing on communication campaigns, saving electricity, using energy efficient products and services. I distributed 96 000 emergency loadshedding packs to the indigent, as the Premier alluded to in his speech, focusing on Matriculants and the elderly with total spending totalling R67 million in this current financial year; implementing Municipal Pool Buying, again as alluded to by the Premier, which allows municipalities to combine their buying capabilities in procuring renewable energy; comprehensively estimating the energy demand in the Western Cape by developing an Integrated Resource Plan which will better allow Government to create the long term solutions to end loadshedding for good, and finally, pulling together teams of experts and field leaders to supercharge our approach to the crisis and make sure our resources go the distance towards resolving loadshedding.

Despite the fact that this is not this Government's mandate to do so, we see this Government and this Department taking the initiative in making the hard choices which will put this province out of the energy crisis.

Hon Speaker, already we hear of towns like Riversdale, which are in the early stages of a loadshedding free future as a result of this Department's efforts.

I am confident that when we welcome Premier Winde back for his next term, he will continue this sterling progress.

Another way in which this Government is leading the way is through the continued rollout of internet access and e-Innovation facilities. With the increase in population of the Western Cape there is an ever-increasing need for greater access to the internet, digitalisation and data governance. Many of the 150 000 people that have migrated to this province in the past year have shifted their work behaviour to remote working. This has placed a greater emphasis on data security and governance.

There is also an increasing emphasis on accessing the Government's e-Services. As stated in last year's budget, a new Public Facing Platform was developed and this will be rolled out in the coming financial year. However, this vital part of the customer experience, as well as the citizen-centred culture of this Government, is now under threat, due to the in-year budget cuts and is now subject to the availability of funds.

Hon Speaker, as previously alluded to every strategy of this Government must be supported by excellent data quality. Thus, this Department will place a greater emphasis on the few interventions to provide proper support to all departments. Among others, these interventions include, the centre has rolled out over 2 000 high-speed broadband connectivity sites in the interim. 1600 of these sites offering a public WiFi hotspot, affording every citizen six gigabytes of free data per device per month.

The current Broadband servicing contract under which these connectivity sites are governed expires on 1 October 2024. The upgrade to this agreement, commonly called Broadband 2.0 was initiated via the relevant channels on March 31, 2023. R526,979 million has been allocated to this project in this financial year, in order to finalise the procurement process with the combined total of R1,5 billion over the MTEF.

This clearly demonstrates that even in these exceedingly difficult times, this Government remains proactive improving its digitisation vision of – and I quote, "a Western Cape where every citizen in every town and village has access to a modern, robust, and affordable high speed Broadband environment that connects Government, citizens and the economy to improve productivity and access to new markets."

To further prove the Western Cape Government's connectivity structure there will be a policy guideline and a roadmap developed for the use of Artificial Intelligence technology. Hon Speaker, one final way in which you are leading

the way is the continued support for the office of the Commissioner for Children. R20,3 million will be allocated to this office over the MTEF so that the voices of the children of this province continue to be heard and their rights upheld.

Hon Speaker, in these troubled times, coherent vision and ethical leadership is sorely needed, and vital to navigating us out of this myriad of crises. This Government has shown itself competent in leading the way in showing the rest of the country that there is hope and a better future in which everyone has the opportunity to shine. So, as we move towards these elections, let us do. Let us do a National Government that cares for all the citizens and is competent to lead the country into better times across all aspects of society. Let us do a National Government that listens to its people and acts to improve living standards. Let us do a National Government that is accountable to its people and that politicians fear the citizens and not the other way around. Let us do a National Government that conducts itself with integrity at all times and at all its levels. Let us do a National Government that conducts its business, both external and internal, with respect. Let us do a National Government that is responsive to any event with speed and empathy. Most of all, hon Speaker, let us do a National Government that does the right thing. Let us do a Government at the national level that acts like this Government does at the provincial level. It is only then that South Africa will live out the true meaning of its creed in achieving quality human rights and freedoms for all. I thank you. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!



The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Fry. I now recognise the hon Premier, Premier Winde.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you very much to all of the members who took part... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Dugmore, what is your point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Speaker, I would just like to ask whether, when considering the Published List of Speakers, there was a time of 33 minutes allocated to member Fry and he, I think, used less than half of that. [Interjection.]

The PREMIER: Are you being blunt? That is really a pathetic point.

The SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore, that is not a point of order. Hon members, that is not a point of order and I would like to remind the hon Dugmore, after five years, that during a debate the speaking time and names can be changed. So there is no need for the 33 minutes, it can actually – it could have been adjusted. [Laughter.] Order, members! [Interjections.] Order, members! I am not going to get into a Rules Workshop now at the end of term. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much. That was a pathetic point, not a point of order. Thank you very much to the members that took part in this debate. First of all to the Chairman of the Committee, member Fry, thank you very for your inputs in this debate, but also thank you very much for the role that you have played in chairing the Committee over the term. I want to thank you for that. I want to thank you for the way in which you have conducted the processes, the oversight, I really do appreciate it. Of course, you know, calling us to account when necessary, and really, I do appreciate that.

I also want to say to the hon Cassiem, thank you very much for your inputs. I only have two things to say in reply. The first one is that your coalition partner, the ANC, is actually at a national level the party that is responsible through the Constitution for policing. You need to understand that. I know that this is getting towards the end of the term for you, but you do need to understand that. I also need to point you to data because you need to have a look at the data, take the Safety Plan and you can obviously criticize and you must hold us accountable to various issues in the Safety Plan, but you must also look at the data. So five years ago, when the Safety Plan started to be developed, four years ago, when the Safety Plan started to be implemented with Boots on the Ground, Leap Officers in partnership with the City, and those hotspot areas that the Safety Plan focused on. The data shows that that is the only place in South Africa where there has been a decline in the murder rate. You must use data in these debates. You can obviously play politics around it, but you must use the data, so you must first of all understand the context of the Constitution and then you must use data, otherwise you are not adding to

the debate.

I also want to draw your attention to another area where you are in coalition with the ANC, because you must also understand that as an Opposition party, when you come to talk and debate at these levels, you must also remember that you are a party of Government and you are a party of Government in this Province in the Municipality of Knysna, and quite frankly, your governing record there is absolutely atrocious. You cannot deliver water to the citizens. You cannot manage sewerage systems for the citizens. You cannot remove their waste. You cannot get the basics right, let alone the financial management. You have run out of money, and probably one of the towns in this province that should be able to pay its way, that does have the ability to bring in sufficient rates and taxes in order to make sure that you narrow the Gini coefficient, you make a real difference... [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: The property owners are underrated, and you know it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I am going to talk to you just now, hon Dugmore...  
[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: ...that you make a real difference where you are governing and you are obviously failing, you and your coalition partner of the ANC.

[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Go and check.

The PREMIER: I now want to move to the hon Dugmore, to the hon Dugmore.

[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Richard ... Go and check.

The CHIEF WHIP: You must keep quiet.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

The PREMIER: To the hon Dugmore, thank you very much for your inputs. I would like to comment as follows, and probably most of your speech that you gave today was probably the speech that you wrote for yesterday because you were not or you did not really talk about the budget at all, and this is a budget debate, but, Speaker, if you will allow me I will reply to the questions as answered, because they do not, as I have said, apply to the budget, but I will reply to the questions as put in this debate.

First of all, dignity, where the hon started and he spoke about, you know, what happens on Human Rights Day. Well, I can speak for myself, because I know

where I was, I was speaking to ambulance personnel who go out and really give those who have lesser ability, really talking to them about changing people's rights in this province. I spoke to the ambulance people, to the systems.

I went to the health processes and spoke to our frontline services. I engaged with our fire-fighters. I engaged with our emergency personnel. I did not have a big taxpayers' expense, eat-meat-and-greet function as we see time and time again when any of these holidays come about, and wait for 27 April, you are going to see millions spent by the ANC, as an Election Campaign, and not really dealing with the issues that our citizens face, because when it comes to human rights in our country the ANC are seriously failing the citizens of this country. If you think about safety and 27 000 murders or people being murdered in this country, where are those human rights? The ANC misses that boat, absolutely!

Energy, I mean, if electricity is seen as a right, wow! Has the ANC not failed the citizens of this country, every year it gets worse and worse and worse, and of course last year the worst in 16 years of loadshedding.

If I think about healthcare, education, water supply, I mean you just name it, SASSA, the ANC cannot even get a basic SASSA payment to the most vulnerable citizens of our country. They cannot do any of those things well at all. The only thing they can do is on a Human Rights Day they take millions and millions and millions of rands worth of taxpayers' money and hold a big function, food and partying and they do not get anything right other than that.

[Interjection.] That is shocking and that cannot be a track record that I would be provided there. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: That is an ongoing programme. They keep on stealing the people's money... [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Absolutely not.

The PREMIER: ...an absolute ongoing problem that the ANC has. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

The PREMIER: And that is probably the most important reason as to why they should be voted out of power. Now let us get to – his comment was "the Premier promised to produce a vaccine." Well, first of all, that is a lie. I did not promise to produce a vaccine. [Interjections.]

†'n AGBARE LID: Hou aan lieg.

[An HON MEMBER: Keep on lying.]

The PREMIER: But what I did do, what I did do... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, members! Order! Premier, please take your seat.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: On a point of order, hon Speaker, the Premier ought to come with a substantive motion because he is accusing the hon member Dugmore of lying.

An HON MEMBER: Sit down!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: So he needs to produce a substantive motion in order to substantiate on that claim. He cannot just say the member is lying.

An HON MEMBER: Point taken.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, Order, members! [Interjection.] Order, members!

Thank you, hon Deputy Chief Whip. Hon Members, order members!  
[Interjections.]

Order, members! Hon members, you had an opportunity to be on the Speakers' List. You had your inputs, you made your inputs and now the Premier is responding to those inputs. If you do not like what you hear then that – you can take that outside of this Chamber, but can I please ask that in the interest of the decorum of this House and the respect to one another as hon members,

that you allow the Premier to make his submission and this running commentary to please be at a minimal. We are only on the first Order of the Day.

Hon Premier, my apologies. Please continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. So, I did not say that we would produce a vaccine, but what I did say is that we would procure one, because at that time we were in the second wave of this pandemic and the ANC again had failed the citizens of this province. Countries were delivering vaccines to their citizens across the world, except in South Africa. The ANC again had failed in getting the basics right. [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Now you are talking nonsense.

The PREMIER: They failed so many times the citizens of this country, but at that stage they were totally failing. We were moving into a budget time and I had said and made the public comment that if the ANC could not provide vaccines, what we would do in this province is, we would get it right. We would provide those vaccines and so we started a process of number one, going through a budget process to add it to our budget so that we could put money aside for procurement.

This was in the beginning stages of January 2021 in the second wave of this



pandemic, and of course, at that stage, because the ANC had failed so dismally in procuring these vaccines, we started to put the budget together, but I already started calling myself companies around the world and I would like the hon member Dugmore to just perhaps engage with some of his ANC colleagues at the national level at that time were trying the same thing and failing, and if you remember the dollars that were paid eventually for vaccines, and one wonders how much went into backhanders and friends of the ANC in that process, because we were looking at between \$10 and \$12 dollars a vaccine. We did not have a budget in the Western Cape at that stage because we still had to go through the budget process which we are doing right now, so what I did was, Zweli Mkhize, if you remember Zweli Mkhize, he was the Health Minister at that time before some complications came in and his normal ANC colleagues involved in all sorts of other programmes of benefiting family members etcetera, but he was the Minister at that stage and I will read from the WhatsApp because at that stage I was already getting vaccines available for us, but I did not have the budget yet. So instead of just waiting until the Province could procure them I straight away sent the vaccines that I could get to Dr Anban and to the Minister. His message back to me was:

"Hi Premier, sorry I cannot take your call. I am in a meeting. Thank you very much for the information. Dr Anban has already have briefed me about the one million doses that you can get at \$3 and the 20-million more doses that you are able to get."

Now, this is before the ANC could procure any doses, I was already getting them at \$3 dollars. We could not procure them for this Province, so what did I

do? I phoned the National Health Department and I phoned the National Minister and said: "I can get them way cheaper than you are advocating at the moment. Here they are."

I made them available. Well, it just died there and then because, of course, when we did manage to get, we got them at \$10 and \$12 dollars a pop. Why? Typical of the ANC procurement processes, there has to be slots cut in for their friends and family. That is the problem with the ANC. That is the problem with the ANC. So there is the real issue around vaccines.

The second issue around vaccines, because the ANC was failing so dismally, nothing in the procurement supply chains in anybody that I spoke to around the world, so when we made the announcement, guess what happened. Suddenly the ANC wakes up and say: "Oh, well, we may better start getting on the bus here..." and that was the key requirement here. That is called politics, when you say you cannot deliver, we will deliver, and suddenly they woke up to the fact, although South Africans had to pay three times more when it came to the pricing. So Dugmore, you must please speak to your ANC colleagues, except perhaps they do not speak to you at all.

Then the next point that you raised, hon Dugmore, is one about electricity. Now he raises the questions in the Standing Committee. [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: You forgot about the [Inaudible] points.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: He then says I did not give him the answer, but I have given the answer and you can go and listen to the recordings and look at the minutes. I said there are 2 000 megawatts in the pipeline right now. They will be delivered between 18 and 24 months, because they are all different programmes in different municipalities at different speeds. When? Between 18 and 24 months is the delivery time of those tenders.

The second thing I said to him, hon Speaker, on pricing, was that they are coming in at cents per kilowatt hour and not at rands, which Eskom, because he keeps on saying that Eskom is going to deliver better prices than the new processes are going to deliver, the private sector are going to deliver. Eskom first of all, cannot deliver energy even at the price that they are delivering at the moment, and the increases that they are giving every year and projected for the next five years will be double-digit every single year. There will be no doubt about that and of course procurement with the private sector with a multitude of suppliers at cents per kilowatt hour and not rands per kilowatt hour... [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: You never, you said it would be concluded... [Interjection.]

The PREMIER: ...electricity in the Western Cape will be far cheaper than in

any other province in South Africa.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: No-no, you still cannot answer that.

Mr T FRY: You cannot handle the truth.

The PREMIER: He then goes on to talk about Agulhas and the R623,61 which is the surcharge of power coming into the system. Now I want to say to the citizens of this province and to the Mayor of that municipality, I have already engaged with him that I do not believe we should be charging a cent, not the R623,61. [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: So they messed up, so the DA messed up.

The PREMIER: Sorry, what was that?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: The DA messed up that.

The PREMIER: Oh did it, so what should we do? Should we reverse that?

The SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore and hon Premier! Can I please remind you guys not to have a dialogue. Hon Premier, can you please speak to me.

The PREMIER: I can presume what he is saying is we should reverse it, but I have already engaged, because I do not think we should be charging that surcharge. In actual fact, we should not be enabling that. We should be incentivising even more. I like hon Dugmore's argument, and I think it is right and I will engage with that DA municipality, as long as the hon Dugmore engages with his ANC municipalities, who actually charge more than Agulhas for the same thing. So R623,61 is what an Agulhas charges. In Knysna the ANC and the EFF who run Knysna, there it is R682,69 and in Bitou which the ANC runs along with other coalition partners, it is now even more. It is R770,59.  
[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Who said that? Who said that?

The PREMIER: There, have a look at that. Hon Dugmore comes here with a little piece of sliver, which I agree should not be charged, but he comes here and he does not even know that his own municipality is charging way in excess of that. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Bitou and... [Interjections.]

Mr L L MVIMBI: ...was a representative of the DA.

The SPEAKER: Order! [Interjections.] Order. Hon Premier, please take your seat. [Interjections.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: It is your policy.

The SPEAKER: Hon members! [Interjections.]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Jaag hom uit!

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Chase him out]

An HON MEMBER: Look in Hansard.

The SPEAKER: Hon members on my left-hand side, if you wanted to be on the Speakers' List to make inputs you could have been on the Speakers' List. It is now the opportunity for the Premier to respond to inputs already made to this debate.

Hon members, I am going to ask you to please work with me. We are only on the first Order of the Day. We have a long day ahead of us and please allow the person on the floor to have an opportunity to make his of his submission.

Hon Mvimbi, is that a point of order on my comments?

Mr L L MVIMBI: Not on your comment, hon Speaker, I just want to find out is the Premier willing to take a question?

The SPEAKER: Please take your seat, I will ask the Premier.

The PREMIER: No.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is not prepared to take a question. Hon Premier, please continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. Speaker, then the hon Dugmore goes on to talk about... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: You are not even able to answer that.

The PREMIER: ...the Public Procurement Bill and BEE and all of these pieces of legislation that are all part of ANC policy. Now, we know that in actual fact those policy frameworks are the exact policy frameworks that has taken the country to the space that we are in now.

The Public Procurement Policies are exactly those programmes and processes that have enabled the ANC to steal as much money as possible, billions and billions. The Jobs for Pals programmes have exactly what the ANC has been doing... [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Jobs for palls.

The PREMIER: The legislation that they write within their policies does just that, enabling theft, enabling jobs for palls, it is just exactly what the problem is with South Africa. Just read the Zondo Commission and you will see that is how policy is affected and what has the ANC done about it? They all go, "do not worry; we have done the Zondo Commission." No-one is in jail. They need to sort out their own members because it is their own members that had enabled this horrendous environment that our country finds itself in.

Then I want to say the hon Dugmore comes here and starts to raise and put staff members' names on the platform here. When he comes here with information he has got no background or backing for that information. It is unacceptable actually how he uses this space but he comes in to talk about the filling of a vacancy.

So let me tell the hon Dugmore the position for this vacancy became vacant on 1 January 2020. The post was advertised on November 22, 2019, with a closing date of 17 December 2019. [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Before it became vacant.

The PREMIER: Of course, then the DG... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!



The PREMIER: Of course if the DG is going to end his term, you re-advertise for the job. I mean that is exactly again to my previous point, they have no idea about how processes work, because what happens is it normally goes to the internal cadre deployment team inside Luthuli House. They do not go through processes like this. The ANC, and that is the problem with the ANC. [Interjections.] The problem with the ANC they do not understand proper due process so let me say again, he says no process was followed, some cadre deployment issue, I do not know, but this is the process. I will give it again. The position became vacant on 1 January 2020... [Interjections.] ANC members, that means a contract is coming to the end. Second... [Interjections.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: You do not need to explain that.

The PREMIER: No, I do need to explain it because you do not understand it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Ms R WINDVOGEL: We know the process.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Mr Speaker, the post was advertised. He said it was not. The post was advertised on 22 November 2019 with the closing date of 17 December 2019. The post was advertised.

Now listen to this, the post was advertised in the Western Cape Government's *SMS Vacancy Bulletin*, the DPSA's Public Service Vacancy Circular. The DPSA – not a provincial, a national DPSA Public Service Vacancy Circular and national newspapers. The post was also advertised on indeedtalent.com, Glassdoor, LinkedIn Limited Listings, Adzuna, Jubal and Google Jobs. He says it was not advertised. [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: 2020?

The PREMIER: Then 108 applications were received. See the table below. Then, "Candidate 1: Masters Degree in Housing Development and Management; Candidate 2: Doctorate Degree in Town and Regional Planning; Candidate 3: BS Engineering Civil Honours and Masters of Business and Administration," and so we can go on. "BA Honours, Candidate 4, Development Studies," and so we can go on.

Then, Mr Speaker, interviews were held on 21 January 2020. See also the table above. Then the official was appointed, effective 1 March 2020.

"The following served as a motivation for the appointment as set out in the nomination approval submission: the candidate is currently..."

This is before she was appointed, not some cadre deployment from somewhere else:

"The candidate is currently employed at the Department of Human Settlements as a Director of Affordable Housing. The incumbent is

responsible for the management and coordination of Affordable Housing Directorate, which incorporates the Rental Housing and Gap Housing direct."

So the hon member must not come here, cast aspersions, use this platform for a lot of rubbish, absolute rubbish and let me end, Mr Speaker. Then the hon Dugmore has the audacity to come here and speak about happiness indices. [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Do you know that when it comes to happiness and measurement of happiness, just think about measuring happiness in South Africa when you have no energy, when SASSA cannot pay you, when you do not have a job and poverty is getting worse, the Gini coefficient is getting worse because that is what happens under ANC rule and under ANC Government. It does not happen in this province, but it happens in their provinces and it happens nationally.

Me R WINDVOGEL: Jissis!

The PREMIER: Countries that actually have a better rating on a happiness index than South Africa are Venezuela at 79, Colombia at 78, Bolivia at 73 and Russia at 72, and guess where we are under ANC rule? 83! [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: We improved.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: We improved.

The PREMIER: Unacceptable. This ANC is not about happiness, this ANC, Mr Speaker, is about absolute misery in this country. They have brought this country to its knees. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: And guess what, Mr Speaker, on 29 May this country can make a decision on whether we want to be the sadness of the ANC... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: ...or bring in the happiness of the DA. [Interjections.]

HON MEMBERS: No!

The PREMIER: I thank you very much. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon members, order! [Interjections.] Order, members! The debate is done.

Ms N D NKONDLO: The Premier is quiet on DA cadre deployment.

The SPEAKER: Hon Mvimbi, can I please ask that the IT – I do not know who, which member was raising an interjection?

HON MEMBERS: Nkondlo.

The SPEAKER: Hon Nkondlo, no interjections are allowed if you participate on the hybrid system. I would like to draw your attention to Rule 40 of our Standing Rules.

Hon Members, that brings us to the end of this debate. I am going to suspend the House now for five minutes to allow the guests of Minister Meyer to take their seats. The House is suspended.

**[Business of the House is suspended for clearing of the bays at 11:19]**

**[Business of the House resumed at 11:25]**

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. The Secretary will read the second Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 11: Agriculture – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2024]

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

Minister Meyer.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, hon members of the Provincial Cabinet, hon Leaders of the Official Opposition in their absentia, members of this esteemed House, special guests, the media, and members of the public, thank you for joining us here today.

Hon Speaker, today I rise to table the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's 2024/25 Appropriation Budget of R1 billion. Hon Speaker when I arrived at the Legislature this morning, I was met by the Western Cape's Agri Worker of the Year, Vivian Jacobs, as member of the Western Cape's Prestige Agri Workers. I welcome Vivian to the House today and may he please stand. Vivian, thank you for being here. [Applause.]

He is the Agri Worker of the Year. He won the competition, travelled to the Netherlands to Rotterdam. He visited the agri-value chain. He also visited the biggest Fruit Logistica Festival in Berlin in Germany. We are proud that the farm worker is now a leader on the farm. Thank you for joining us today. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, Annemarie Verwey, also fondly known as Suster Ann or Mammie, is my special guest today in this House. Thank you for joining us here today, all the way from Murraysburg. My wife and I together with Jackie Pandaram travelled all the way to Murraysburg and thank you for that lovely meal that you made for us during our visit. It was delicious and we are very

proud that you can now represent †die Groot-Karoo in hierdie klein Parlement. So dankie dat u vandag hier is. [the Great Karoo in this little Parliament. So thank you for being here today.]

Suster Ann has been involved in voluntary community activities in Murraysburg for more than 23 years. In 2023 she received the Gold Award for the Western Cape Service Excellence Awards in the Category Best Citizen: Individual.

†Agbare Speaker, die dame met die hoed het 'n nasionale ambassadeur geword toe sy in Februarie verlede maand in 2024 'n aanbieding by die *Landbou Weekblad* gedoen het oor *Oplossings vir Suid-Afrika se Platteland Konferensie*.

Ek is dankbaar, Jackie, ek is dankbaar Darryl Jacobs en Dr Mogale dat ons ook vandag vir Tannie Ann vandag in hierdie Huis het. Dankie Tannie Ann, dat jy 'n verskil gemaak het en dat jy vereer word vandag en ek voel geëerd dat u my uitnodiging aanvaar het om vandag my spesiale gas in hierdie Huis te wees.

[Hon Speaker, the lady with the hat became a national ambassador when in February last month in 2024 she made a presentation at the *Landbou Weekblad* on *Oplossings vir Suid-Afrika se Platteland Konferensie* [Solutions for South Africa's Rural Conference].

I am grateful, Jackie, I am grateful, Darryl Jacobs and Dr Mogale that today we also have *Tannie Ann* in this House. Thank you, *Tannie Ann*, that you made a difference and that you are honoured today and I feel privileged that you

accepted my invitation to be my special guest in this House.]

Hon Speaker, when I took up the position and the Premier appointed me five years ago, I immediately set up five ministerial priorities, each with a clear goal and a measurable outcome.

Today, I want to give feedback to this House about my performance, and the performance of the Department, the performance of the stakeholders in Agriculture in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, in the Western Cape Agriculture has thrived on the edge of chaos – chaos primarily being championed by the ANC National Government.

What makes this achievement remarkable, hon Speaker, is that agriculture has thrived despite the failures of the National Government – failures that impacted directly on the growth and the job opportunities of the agricultural sector.

Hon Speaker, the most pressing failures, according to the Agbiz – this is the Agri-Business Confidence Index – were the following: intensified delays and the inefficiencies in the Port. We have spoken at length in this House about the state of the harbours.

Rising crime in South Africa, the poor rail and infrastructure, rising protectionism internationally again in key export markets, increased geopolitical uncertainty. There is war in Europe, in Ukraine, there is war in the Middle East and so there is increased geopolitical uncertainty.



In fact I want to thank the Premier again talking about geopolitical uncertainty. He gave me a book to read, *Rescue: From Global Crisis to a Better World*. Geopolitics is part of the world's efforts to rescue the world from this global geopolitical crisis, but we have also seen the impact of loadshedding on agriculture.

Hon Speaker, I now turn this part of my speech to my priorities:

Number one, Structure, Education, Training and Research: over the last five years the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has provided agricultural education and training to 2 248 registered students since 2019 when I was appointed. We have offered short skills courses to 17 000 beneficiaries since I was appointed; approved financial support to 539 qualifying students. We have introduced – and thank you to the colleagues Darryl Jacobs and the team, we have introduced a new Diploma in Agriculture.

We have obtained accreditation from the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations for qualifications such as "Livestock Farmer, Supervisor, Orchard and Vineyard Foreman." There has been a 77,4% increase in the number of schools that have expanded their curriculum to include at least one agricultural subject.

†Agbare Speaker, u weet dat ek in hierdie Huis geveg het vir meer landbouskole en meer landbouvakke in bestaande skole. Ek is dankbaar vir die

Wes-Kaapse Departement van Onderwys wat my gehelp het sodat ons meer landbou-vakke en meer landbouskole hier in die Wes-Kaap kan vestig.

[Hon Speaker, you know that I had fought in this House for more agricultural schools and more agricultural subjects in existing schools. I am grateful for the Western Cape Department of Education that helped me so that we could establish more agricultural subjects and more agricultural schools here in the Western Cape.]

Hon Speaker, our research aims to grow the agricultural sector and create more jobs.

Central to that growth is the quality of the scientific support our producers have highlighted by one project, for example, our Bull Project making genetically superior bulls available to smallholder farmers to bolster the quality of their herds.

†Tannie Ann, ons gee vir die kleinboere hierdie bulle sodat hulle 'n nuwe hoë kwaliteit genetiese materiaal kan vestig. Ons gee dit vir hulle vir 'n R100 vir 'n bepaalde tydperk. Ons stuur ons veeartse daarheen. Ons kyk na die ding, sodat hulle genetiese kwaliteit kan verbeter sodat hulle beter produkte het vir die uitvoermark, vir die abattoirs waarby geslag word. Na drie jaar kom die bul weer terug. Die veeartse ondersoek dit, bekyk dit, doen navorsing, uitstekende werk wat gedoen word – only in the Western Cape.

[Tannie Ann, we give to these small farmers these bulls so that they can establish new high quality genetic material. We give it to them for R100 for a

specific period. We send veterinarians there. We look at the thing, so that they can improve genetic quality so that they have better products for the export market, for the abattoirs where they slaughter. After three years the bull comes back. The veterinarians investigate it, look at it, do research, excellent work that is being done – only in the Western Cape.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, before you continue, can I please remind you not to engage the members of the gallery, and speak to me, please.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I apologise, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: You can speak through me to the members, but not directly.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Honourable Tannie Ann, I may not speak directly to you. I must only speak... [Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: ...through the Speaker to you. That is our Rules in this House. I will honour the Rules of this House.

Hon Speaker, we had also the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Ostrich Auction. We bolstered the ostrich industry with superior genetic material and again, through the Speaker.

†Tannie Ann, die volstruise moet die beste genetiese materiaal hê sodat die volstruis se vleis en die kwaliteit van 'n hoë standaard is sodat wanneer Dr Ilse Trautmann en Bongiswa dit wil uitvoer, dan is dit top genetiese kwaliteit

materiaal.

[Tannie Ann, the ostriches must have the best genetic material so that the ostrich's meat and the quality are of a high standard when Dr Ilse Trautman and Bongiswa want to export it, then it is top genetaic quality material.]

Well, we also have the seventh round of funding for the Alternative Crops Fund (ACF), allocated R1,9 million to nine research projects. We also, as members of this House will know, people asked what about cannabis. Well, we have done research into cannabis, not for... but for medicinal reasons and because some of the members are on a high this side of the House, cannabis can help you to calm you down [laughter] and so we have done some fantastic outstanding research on the cannabis industry. We have developed a plan and I want to thank Dr Ilse Trautmann and the team because now we have a thing called a Can Plan, because there is a place for that.

We also have the Flyover Project to which I will return later.

Hon Speaker, my second priority is Farmer Support, hon Speaker, the past five years have not been easy for our producers, our exporters, our farmers, and I am so happy to also see Wendy Petersen in the audience here today. Despite this, agriculture is, however, thriving on the edge of chaos. My heart bleeds for farmers when they see the floods, when they see the fires, when they see the situation at the ports at the harbour, electricity – my heart is bleeding. Farmers get no support, and so what we have done here in this province, as promised at the beginning of my term, we have increased the gross value add

of primary agriculture production by an average of 3% over the past four years. This is against the background of COVID-19, the floods, the energy crisis, and the failing infrastructure, mainly the rail and particularly the harbours.

†n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor!

[An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: We supported the expansion of the Commercial Primary Agricultural Sector, both Black and White, to ensure regional food security and to increase our export earnings. Hon Speaker, the Department's Food Security initiatives continue to make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable households. Thank you to our Project Manager Company, Casidra, for your work in this regard. I am particularly happy to see the Chief Executive Officer of Casidra here. Where is he now, thank you Dr Du Plessis, for outstanding work in Casidra. [Applause.]

I will later return to your exceptional leadership that you displayed during this term, but hon Speaker, I am excited that the youth are taking the issue of food security in our communities.

One such example is the Feed the Khaltsha Community Garden based at the premises of Sibongile Day and Night Centre in Khayelitsha. They are standing right there at the back. I have visited them.

Please remain standing. Your work needs to be recorded in this Chamber, the

unwavering determination through you, Speaker, accompanied by the infrastructure development and support from the Department, propelled them towards sustainable vegetable production.

Hon Speaker, allow me then to welcome Feed the Khaltsha Community Garden, Mthandazo Xabanisa, Baluleka Sisusa, Mandla Phumela. They had only one rake and a spade and a passion for agriculture. They have taken that up and they have fought poverty and insecurity in their community, and I want to thank them for outstanding leadership, because when I visited them in Khayelitsha, with our extension officers I saw something magical together with my staff and Dr Mogale. Thank you for your outstanding leadership in food security in your community. You may be seated. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, another recipient of the support of the Western Cape Government is Caroline Charles all the way from Beaufort West, who is the proud gardener of Aunty Cares Home-Food Garden.

†Agbare Speaker, in Caroline Charles, sy is met ons vandag, in haar eie woorde, ek haal aan, sy praat in die Huis:

“Wanneer jy ’n groentetuin het, het jy kos en jy is ook in staat om selfs die armes te voed”.

Baie dankie vir jou teenwoordigheid vandag, Caroline Charles. Beaufort Wes

gaan nooit weer dieselfde wees nie. Baie dankie. [Applous.]

[Hon Speaker, in Caroline Charles's, she is with us today, in her own words, I quote, she speaks in the House:

“When you have a vegetable garden, you have food and you are also able to feed even the poor”.

Thank you for your presence today, Caroline Charles. Beaufort West will never be the same again. Thank you.] [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, during the period under review the Western Cape Government has supported 170 Black commercial farmers and conducted and provided advisory services through 20 349 visits to farmers to provide advisory services. Speaker, this is extraordinary, because we had COVID-19, people were scared to travel and here we visited 20 000 visits to farmers during this period.

Hon Speaker, one of the recipients of our support is the Akkedisberg Workers Trust. They are the owners of the Akkedisberg Boerdery (Pty) Limited represented here today by Christel Moses and Mariëtte Moos. I recently visited them in the Overberg region. I want them to please stand. [Applause.]

Fantastic, outstanding! They acquired 20 hectares of land, 16 of those hectares under irrigation. They have made their own wine. Today 10 years later they are the proud owners of an award-winning "Southern Treasures Pinotage," and I know my friend loves Pinotage and I recommend the Pinotage of the people whenever you visit that area. Pinotage is the name of the game. [Applause.]

Thank you, Christel and Mariette for joining us here today. They won gold in a short space of time for Pinotage. It is exceptional. It is remarkable. But I want another man to stand who is sitting next to them. Hennis, an outstanding public servant for the last 40 years; this man is still working, he still wants to work and must work because he supported them all the way. Thank you, Hennis, for bringing them to this Parliament here today. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, our research has proven that for Land Reform to be successful, the project must have access to land and tenure and security, capital, passion, hardworking beneficiaries, mentors, access to markets, and product input into that investment. This is confirmed with a recent independent external evaluation which the Western Cape Government has done.

We have done research and our research has demonstrated that 83% success rate of representative samples of land reform business funded and supported by the Department, 83% success of the sample that was selected.

†n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor! [Applous.]

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

An HON MEMBER: Well done!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, last week I joined our partners from Partnership for Agricultural Land Solutions, also known as PALS, in Aurora in Piketberg, in the West Coast. With innovative funding from



Nedbank, the recipients of the Pele Eya Pele Agri, Simon Mabete and his son Romeo Mabete were able to receive the title deed that the Premier was talking about, to almost 1 500 hectares of prime agricultural land.

This was made possible through the willingness of the farmer, Gerrit van der Merwe and his son, Arno van der Merwe, supported by the excellent facilitation by Partners in Agri Land Solutions (PALS), by Lennox and by Gerrit van der Merwe to embrace the role that farmers can play in transforming the agricultural sector. Facilitated by the teams at PALS the project brings together two generations of Van der Merwes and two generations of Mabetes committed to embrace the future and growing together.

†Agbare Speaker, my derde prioriteit is Landelike Veiligheid. Dit is in lyn met die Wes-Kaapse Regering se fokus om die Wes-Kaap 'n veilige plek te maak. Agbare Speaker, die Wes-Kaap het hard gewerk om die Provinsiale Landelike Veiligheidsplan te implementeer, wat vereis dat die Regering vennootskappe met die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie diens het, die buurtwagte, die plaas-buurtwagte, die private sektor en enige ander struktuur wat 'n bydrae kan maak.

Ek plaas op rekord my dank en waardering aan ons Adjunkdirekteur Generaal, mnr Darryl Jacobs, vir die groot bydrae wat hy en sy span en Jackie Pandaram daar gelewer het. Ons plaaswerkers en eienaars moet in staat wees om besigheid te doen en om die nasie te voed en om die ekonomie 'n hupstoot te gee sonder om bekommerd te wees dat hulle deur misdadigers geteiken gaan

word. Ons vennootskappe met landelike gemeenskappe en die 450 geregistreerde Plaas- en Buurtwagte speel 'n kritieke rol in die verwesenliking van ons droom om ons landelike gemeenskappe meer veilig te maak.

[Hon Speaker, my third priority is Rural Safety. It is in line with the Western Cape Government's focus to make the Western Cape a safe place. Hon Speaker, the Western Cape has worked hard to implement the Provincial Rural Safety Plan, which requires that the Government has partnerships with the South African Police Service, the neighbourhood watches, the farm neighbourhood watches, the private sector and any other structure that can make a contribution.

I place on record my thanks and appreciation to our Deputy Director General, Mr Darryl Jacobs, for the big contribution that he and his team and Jackie Pandaram made there. Our farmworkers and owners must be able to do business and to feed the nation and boost the economy without being worried that they are going to be targeted by criminals. Our partnerships with rural communities and the 450 registered farm and neighbourhood watches play a critical role in the realisation of our dream to make our rural communities safer.]

Honourable Speaker, with the support of my colleague, Minister Reagan Allen, I will continue to forge ahead with plans to ensure that agri workers, farmers and producers and rural communities are the backbone of our rural economy, that they must be safe.

Hon Speaker, my fourth priority was Market Access. Hon Speaker, as

highlighted by my colleague the Minister of Economic Opportunities, Minister Wenger, when she tabled the 2023 PERO, the Provincial Economic Review and Outlook, she indicated that the agricultural sector, this sector grew by 37% over the last ten years. Remarkable! Exceptional!

Since 2018 agriculture and agri-processing exports increased from R63 billion to R104 billion in 2023, which is an annual average growth of 11%, with 0.1% economic growth, with 1% economic growth, an 11% economic growth over the period is truly remarkable and I thank our exporters, I thank our farmers, I thank our agri workers and I thank all the people in the industry and the value chain.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I also want to thank you, Wendy, because under your leadership the export of wine has also increased, and so during this period we have seen the relative share of the Western Cape agri-processing exports on our African continent from 35% grow to 37%. Obviously I want more of that to happen and particularly am already in contact with my Department about West Africa and East Africa, in particular Kenya.

The relative share of both primary agriculture and agri-processing in the Americas has increased from 6% to 9% and 7% to 10% respectively during the same period. The relative share of the Western Cape primary agriculture exports to Asia has grown from 31% to 35%. People in Asia must drink a little

bit more wine, *Tannie Ann*, through the Speaker, †maar nie daai wat so hard skop nie, net daai ligtetjies [but not those kicking so hard, just those light ones.]

Honourable Speaker, Jacobs Jam Company is a family-owned husband and wife start-up Greenfields jam processing. With the support of this Department of the Western Cape, Jacobs Jam has been able to demonstrate remarkable business growth. They both resigned from their jobs, took the risk, brought the passion, brought their experiences, food science, technology, and marketing skills to this business; had many hiccups, but had one thing – determination. Presently they are listed at Checkers, Shoprite, Pick n Pay and Spar – all made possible by the ongoing support of the Department of Agriculture.

Nigel and Christynn Jacobs, the co-owners are with us today and I want to welcome them. They are from Ceres. Ceres, as you know, the Cape Winelands, the biggest soft fruit industry. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes, hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: When I listened to their story this morning they told me: "We are all over the supermarkets in the Western Cape." They told me this morning, "I want to be all over South Africa," and after that they told me "I want to be all over the world," and so Bongiswa and Dr Trautmann, their work is cut out to support Nigel and the team from Jacobs Jam.

Hon members, on your desk you have received a special gift, Jacob's Jam, and members this is a special day to use this jam, not every day, on your birthday, special holidays, and maybe Easter around the corner. Thank you very much for being here and thank you for blessing us with this.

Hon Speaker, our Veterinary Services played a key role in export facilitation. Over the last five years our Veterinary Export Certification Office issued 36 657 export permits. You cannot just grab the meat and export. You need a permit, but we do not want you to come to the office. Hon members, anybody from there that wants to export maybe to the Bahamas, if you want to export and I am happy that we have the Honorary Consul General of the Bahamas. Mr Werner, can you please stand? [Applause.]

He is also here. I want to welcome him. If we want to export, our office has issued 36 657 export facilities or certificates thereby facilitating exports to the value of R1,5 billion. Obviously my desire is to go to R2 billion. Last year we presented a very successful Inaugural Provincial Veterinary Week which I launched and which had a strong focus on bio-security. Speaker, agriculture is thriving at the edge of chaos.

Hon Speaker, my last and fifth ministerial priority is Climate Change. Hon Speaker, the aerial mapping of agricultural commodity production and infrastructure in the Western Cape provides accurate data, crop yields production trends, which is crucial for forecasts and understanding market

dynamics. This Government thinks before we act, but we need data. You need research and you need evidence, and in this regard the Flyover Project which is unique in the Western Cape, gives insight into the impacts of micro-climate and regional crop changes on crop suitability in traditional growing areas.

Eugene du Preez of SIQ, Speaker, is today in the House, a company that did the actual flying over all the farms in the Western Cape. He joins us today and I am particularly thankful and thank you, Eugene du Preez and your team, for strengthening the Western Cape evidence-based data-led governance and an approach that support us to take decisions that we can back up with research. The budgets are tight, so when we fight for money with the colleagues they say, "Show me the data." Thanks to you I now have the data to approach the Budget Policy Council of this Government. Through your data I can now table a budget of R1 billion, and thank you for flying myself and Dr Mogale over the farms so that we could see how the actual data capturing is taking place. I thank you, and you may be seated. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, during this period under review the Western Cape Department contributed to the sustainability and the development of agriculture by rehabilitating 142 000 hectares of agricultural land and 2 990 hectares of cultivated land under the Conservation Agriculture Practices. When you speak to Dr Trautmann she will just tell you about conservation agriculture. We created 5 794 green jobs. We have rendered 5 195 technical services through LandCare – thank you Aisha – to mitigate the impacts of climate change and enhance resilience. We co-hosted the X International Symposium on Irrigation

of Horticultural Crops with the University of Stellenbosch.

Hon Speaker, we signed a memorandum of understanding between the Departments of Agriculture, my colleague Minister Bredell, Environmental Affairs, and the School of Climate Studies with the University of Stellenbosch to further give impetus into the national and international collaboration.

Hon Speaker, in 2022, Karen Ross, the Secretary for the Californian Department of Food and Agriculture and I signed a memorandum of understanding to promote cooperation in agriculture. I am thankful the Premier was present when we signed a virtual agreement. Secretary Ross was in California in Sacramento. I was here in Cape Town. We had a virtual signature ceremony. Thank you, Premier, for joining us during 2022.

Today I now can report that officials from the Western Cape Department and the Californian Department of Agriculture had engaged 13 other Mediterranean Regions and concluded a Mediterranean Action Partnership. I want to thank Dr Ilse Trautmann that represented me on 4 December in Dubai at COP28. We now have a Mediterranean Global Partnership. There are five Mediterranean regions in the world, Western Cape is one, California is one, it is 40% of the world, and I want to thank Dr Dirk Troskie and Daniel Johnson who accompanied me and Ashia Petersen also later to California, and so I am proud of the work, of the cooperation that we have with the Mediterranean region.

Hon Speaker, earlier this year in line with the Western Cape Government's

commitment to respond proactively to the impact of climate change we hosted recently the first inter-ministerial Committee on Climate Change and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March we had the Climate Change Indaba with international speakers. [Interjections.]

The Deputy Speaker takes the Chair.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Deputy Speaker, thank you for joining us, I always feel safe in your presence. Hon Deputy Speaker, agriculture is thriving through all the chaos in South Africa. In fact members will know we had four floods last year, major floods that caused major damages, but through that chaos agriculture was thriving.

Hon Speaker, there are ambitious investment plans underway for the expansion of the Cape Winelands Airport and the development of the infrastructure and the Intermodal Transport Hub with aspirations to connect all rail, road, sea and air in the future. I am excited about the potential for the development of that place to become an agri-corridor.

Honourable Speaker, I now welcome in this House, Deidre Davids of the Cape Winelands Airport to the House. I visited the place, I was inspired by the work they are doing. They instituted a railway line directly from the Cape Winelands Airport straight to the Port of Cape Town. Thank you for your exceptional leadership. Thank you for bringing the technical knowledge of the Cape Town International Airport to the new Cape Winelands Airport. I am pleased that the



Cape Winelands Airport is placed in that area because that is going to be changing the mobility, and I see the Minister of Mobility. He would have to take note of the great development. I will speak to him. [Applause.]

I want to also convey my thanks and appreciation through the Deputy Speaker to Mr Deon Cloete, the former General Manager of the Cape Town International Airport. His experience, his knowledge, his depth of aviation, but his depth of the whole industry will greatly be benefiting the Cape Winelands Airport. As Deirdre Davids herself comes from the Cape Town International Airport, and transferring those shares there.

As I conclude, hon Speaker, I wish now to make the following key announcements of my Budget 2024/25 and the MTEF allocates the following budgets. I now table in this House, R196,2 million to promote Sustainable Use and Management of Natural Resources, R40 million of this budget will now go to the Ecological Infrastructure; R38,5 million, hon Deputy Speaker, will now go to River Protection and R38 million towards the Flood, and hon Deputy Speaker, I now table also a budget of R216,4 million towards Producer Support Services, helping farmers and producers.

I also table Expansion and Advisory Services, the Western Cape is big; we have 20% of commercial agriculture. We are the biggest agricultural client in the export region, so we need to visit farms. There are a lot of farmers that we need to meet. We have 17 000 farmers. We need to meet them in their physical space and therefore hon Deputy Speaker, I now allocate R35,4 million for this

particular service.

Also for Food Security R16,7 million. R57,8 million, I now allocate to provide for Animal Health Services to prevent and control animal diseases. I want to thank hon Dr Trautmann because we are now working with the concept of “One Health” animal health and human health, because if you eat the wrong stuff you end up in hospital, and for that reason we are responsible to make sure that all the meat and veterinary products are safe at our abattoirs, in the shopping centres, at the DCs, the Distribution Centres, and so that is the money that we will allocate for that for veterinary services, but it is important to do research. Agriculture is a science and a science needs to be researched, so R97,8 million is to improve agricultural production through research focusing also on the mitigation and adaptation options for farmers in the response to climate change.

Hon Speaker, climate change is real, it is here. Last month the world has seen the hottest, †deur u agbare Speaker, Tannie Ann, verlede maand het die wêreld die hoogste temperatuur gesien in Februarie-maand sedert die Industriële Rewolusie. Dit is die impak van klimaatsverandering, en daarom neem hierdie Regering dit nou op met alle erns [through you, hon Speaker, last month the world has seen the highest temperature in February month since the Industrial Revolution. That is the impact of climate change, and therefore this Government treats it with all seriousness.]

Also R30,5 million I now allocate to provide Production Economics and

Marketing Services to agri-businesses; R48.2 million towards Education, Training and Agriculture Skills Development. We have the oldest Agricultural Training College dating back to 1898 and so that college, and thank you to the previous interim head, Mr Darryl Jacobs, because that is an important institution. But hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, we also refurbish the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory. It will be open on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and it has also received an SANAS accreditation.

Hon Speaker, I will now also open the 39<sup>th</sup> World Veterinary Association Congress that will take place in Cape Town in the Western Cape from the 16<sup>th</sup> till the 19<sup>th</sup> of April this year.

Hon Speaker, over the last five years, agriculture has thrived on the edge of chaos and we will continue to thrive. Agriculture, as I conclude, is ready to continue its mission of growing the economy, creating jobs. Hon Speaker, it gives me therefore great pleasure to table today in this House the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Budget of R1,018 billion for deliberation, discussion and adoption in this House.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is a budget to invest in agriculture and to grow the economy of the Western Cape. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. I now recognise the hon Marran. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr P MARRAN: Thank you Deputy Speaker, Premier, members of this Parliament, boyfriends and guests, also the officials, let me greet you, and I am glad that the audience are here that you have invited, MEC. You said: "This is not only a budget to be tabled for the Department but also to do an assessment of the Department's performance."

Let us start at the beginning. In 2019, let me remind you again, a farmer in Stellenbosch was killed, with the surname of Smit. That day you came, you set up a Rural Safety Desk, you disbursed a million for each district to deal with rural safety, and I remind you about a boy that was killed in Klawer by a farmer. That Rural Safety Desk and moneylender's desk could not save that boy.

†n AGBARE LID: Ja, ja, dis waar.

[An HON MEMBER: Yes, yes, that's true.]

Mr P MARRAN: Last month on 4 February a young worker was killed on a farm in De Doorns by security guards appointed by a farmer. Two security guards were arrested. They were denied bail. Why? One, they are foreigners. Secondly, they do not have the necessary documents to be in the country nor do they have the necessary documents to be employed, and we heard nothing.

[Interjections.]

†n AGBARE LID: Dit is waar.

[An HON MEMBER: That's true.]

Mr P MARRAN: We heard nothing.

†n AGBARE LID: Dit is waar, in die Wes-Kaap, in die Wes-Kaap.

[An HON MEMBER: That is true, in the Western Cape, in the Western Cape.]

Mr P MARRAN: We heard nothing about those particular issues. [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: It is wrong, it is wrong!

Mr P MARRAN: So when we speak about the safety, rural safety of farmers...

†Me R WINDVOGEL: Onthou die plaaswerkers.

[Ms R WINDVOGEL: Remember the farm workers.]

Mr P MARRAN: It also includes farm workers.

†Me R WINDVOGEL: Dit is reg.

[Ms R WINDVOGEL: That's right.]

Mr P MARRAN: I am glad that the farm workers are here today. This leader sitting on the opposite side and he is the most senior leader in the DA in this House, he forms policy for the DA. [Interjection.]

†Me N D NKONDLO: Praat, praat, praat, praat net.

[Ms N D NKONDLO: Talk, talk, talk, just talk.]

Mr P MARRAN: And he then said that the agricultural sector has growth worth more than 37%, but in his policy in his manifesto they are suggesting that farm workers should be paid a minimum wage which is equal to the Old Age Pension Grant. [Interjection.]

†Me R WINDVOGEL: Wat 'n skande, 'n skande!

[Ms R WINDVOGEL: What a disgrace, a disgrace!]

Mr P MARRAN: What a shame!

†'n AGBARE LID: 'n Skande!

[An HON MEMBER: A disgrace!]

Mr P MARRAN: In their manifesto they suggested that the labour laws to be relaxed for workers to be fired easily by their bosses. This is what they are standing for. So when we speak about the agriculture sector it seems the farm worker is not important. [Interjection.]

You spoke about Vivian, and I hope Vivian who is an Agri Worker winner got a farm. I hope so, because it is of no use to win accolades, to be sponsored a trip overseas and when you are coming back you remain a poor farm worker.

You spoke about land reform – land reform. You spoke about wherever you are involved your success rate is 83% and then you compare the projects in the Western Cape where National Government is involved. Why is there a distinction? Why are you not supporting all those farmers?

The report that you are referring to, the Hulisani report says that you must support all farmers, and not certain. Why is there a distinction between the two and then you come here and you claim 83% success rate.

Land reform, you spoke about land reform and how the National Department and the officials stole money and they stole land.

Ms A BANS: Exactly!

Mr P MARRAN: Here on the opposite side is one of your members from Stellenbosch. The DA municipality is taking him to court because they are calling him a land thief. [Interjections.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Uh-huh, in the House!

Mr P MARRAN: Your own municipality... [Interjection.]

The Speaker takes the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Hon Marran, please take your seat. [Interjections.]

†Me A BANS: Die waarheid maak seer.

[Ms A BANS: The truth hurts.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, there is a member on the floor. Order members!

[Interjections.]

†Me A BANS: Die waarheid maak seer!

[Ms A BANS: The truth hurts.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Deputy Chief Whip, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP: Yes Chair.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP: Yes Chair, I rise in terms of Rule 59.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP: Chair, I am rising in terms of Rule 59, if the member wants to reflect upon a member of this House they know they need to bring a substantive motion. A substantive motion has not been brought.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Marran, can I please, I can



completely agree with the Deputy Chief Whip. [Interjections.]

†Me A BANS: Ja, die waarheid maak seer!

[Ms A BANS: Yes, the truth hurts!]

The SPEAKER: Please do not cast aspersions on any member and if you have any substantive issue that you want to draw the attention of the House to, can you please follow the Rule in terms of Rule 56 of our Standing Rules. Hon Marran, please continue. [Interjections.]

Mr P MARRAN: Thanks Speaker, let me apologise on behalf of Stellenbosch Municipality for calling that member a land thief. You see, Speaker, you spoke about all the nice things in agriculture and how they are thriving. I brought to this member sitting on the opposite side, Voëlville in Gouda, water that has been cut, electricity that has been cut, and he promised that he will visit. We were there a few weeks ago, no one were there, no one, not a single one. Maybe it is because of farm workers.

Again, Speaker, about rural safety and the transportation of farm workers, an accident in 2020 in Touws River, farm workers have been killed, and last year December month, three farm workers were killed – transported like animals.

The MEC released a statement saying that he will appoint a team to investigate the cause of that particular accident. Four months later there is nothing, nothing from this MEC.

Deputy Speaker, the previous week South Africans celebrated Human Rights Day, I look at the time when the majority of people in South Africa had no basic rights and were actively oppressed by the previous regime, apartheid regime. South Africa's Human Rights Day is a National day historically linked to the Sharpeville massacre of 21 March 1960 when police fired at a peaceful crowd that had gathered to protest against pass laws that prohibited freedom of movement and prevented the majority of people of South Africa from living with dignity. It is commemorated each year in order to remind South Africans of the sacrifices that came with achieving democracy. As a result of that commemoration the country has an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in protection and promotion of human rights.

Speaker, this day is not only of historical significance, as mentioned, this day is also a day of reflection on current challenges and progress thereon. The existence of constitutionally entrenched rights creates the possibility for those rights to be enforced and offers a legal basis for a continuous project of societal transformational progress of turning promises into reality.

Speaker, the majority of people in the Western Cape will continue to live in conditions of abject poverty, and their human rights remain more theoretical than real. He uses the language of social policy and justice but drives a very corporate and unequal agenda. The contrast between the rhetoric...  
[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Marran, I have been listening very carefully. Can I please just remind you that we are busy with the Budget Votes? So can you please draw your contribution back to the actual Vote?

Mr P MARRAN: Thanks Speaker, I am getting there. Speaker, the majority of the Western Cape's people continue to live in conditions of abject poverty, and their human rights remain more theoretical than real. The DA uses language of social policy and justice but drives a very corporate and unequal agenda, and so do their budgets.

The Premier claims that 74% of the budget of this Western Cape Government goes to poor communities. If you go to those poor areas it tells a different story. The contrast between the theoretical and social policy and the reality of corporate driven inequality under the DA's governance cannot be ignored; while the party speaks of justice and equality the major majority of the Western Cape residents languish in poverty where their human rights remain illusive in practice. One of those fundamental rights that our forbearers sought and fought for is the return of the land, the land to be shared by those who work it, and you do not hear in this budget that the MEC had presented, that they tell us that there is a certain portion for land reform. You will hear that the MEC, the Premier and even officials said that "but land reform is not our responsibility and therefore we cannot budget for it."

When we entered this Parliament this Premier said that we are not going to wait for National Government and at that particular time there was a delay in

lifting the walls of the Brandvlei Dam. Premier, you have budgeted R20 million... [Interjection.]

The PREMIER: 2018.

Mr P MARRAN: 2019 when we entered, you budgeted R20 million, right.

The PREMIER: Why?

An HON MEMBER: Ask him!

Mr P MARRAN: You withdraw that R20 million. [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier and hon Marran, can I please ask that you do not get into a dialogue. [Interjections, speaking simultaneously]

Mr P MARRAN: The Premier withdraw... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Marran, please speak through me in order for me to protect you.

Mr P MARRAN: The Premier withdrew that R20 million... [Interjection.]

The PREMIER: Why?

Mr P MARRAN: Because he had suddenly realised – as previous MEC of Agriculture he did not know that water is a national responsibility... [Laughter.] That Premier, because before his term of Premier he was the MEC of Agriculture. He withdrew the R20 million because he had suddenly realised that water is a national responsibility.

The PREMIER: That is not Clanwilliam. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P MARRAN: The Clanwilliam Dam, R4,2 billion has been budgeted, they have started that particular project and 70% of that water will go to Black farmers, 70% of that water. Now if they are claiming... [Interjections.]

†Me A BANS: Die waarheid maak seer.

[Ms A BANS: The truth hurts.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Marran, please take your seat. Can I please ask hon members on my left- and right-hand side, there is a member on the floor. Please allow the hon Marran to make his contribution. Hon Premier, you had your opportunity earlier on. Can I please ask that you do not drown out the speaker on both sides? Hon Marran, can I please also remind you to speak to me.

Mr P MARRAN: Speaker, if we could have budgeted R20 million for water, if

we could have spent a billion rand for police that is not our responsibility, why can we not budget for land reform? [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Uh-huh, the flipside is always...

Mr P MARRAN: Why can we not say in our budget every Agri Worker winner gets a farm or a piece of land? We do not have any excuse not to look after those who are outstanding in agriculture, workers who are performing. Why is it that we cannot budget for them?

Speaker, it cannot be that this sector makes R48,8 billion for the provincial economy, with the impact of lying predominantly in the rural areas. The majority of people living on farms are below 35 years of age and have no form of ownership or inheritance from their parents' property. These young people are used only for labour and when they reach a particular age they will be thrown out because their services will not be needed. No budget even to assist those farm workers, of not being / getting evicted – nothing. [Interjection.]

†Me R WINDVOGEL: Ja.

[Ms R WINDVOGEL: Yes.]

Mr P MARRAN: Because an eviction starts with a labour issue, because courts these days, the only thing that they are looking at is, is there an employment contract between the worker and the owner, and if there is none, they are going to get evicted, and this Premier and this MEC do not budget to assist those.

In conclusion, Speaker, the discourse of the allocation and utilisation of resources within the agricultural sector of the Western Cape has shed light on critical issues affecting our communities. Despite commendable efforts such as educational programmes and jobs, placement initiatives, there remains a glaring disparity between the rhetoric of empowerment and the reality of continued marginalisation particularly amongst Black farmers and farm workers.

Now yesterday the MEC when he spoke, he spoke about Beaufort West and those two farmers where the National Department wanted to throw them off. I brought to you, MEC, a matter of Swellendam where the municipality at that stage tried to evict those farmers... [Interjection.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: They did that. Uh-huh.

Mr P MARRAN: ...livestock farmers, from communal land, and a couple of weeks later they have successfully been evicted. Why? Because you remained silent. You only raise your voice, MEC – through you, Speaker – when it comes to certain issues, where National Government is involved but when it comes to where your party is governing, through the Speaker to the MEC... [Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: ... follow it up.

Mr P MARRAN: Where your party is governing you remain mum, saying nothing, you allow those Black farmers to be evicted.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Bring it to the House.

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Swellendam!

Mr P MARRAN: I brought it under your attention. Why should it be, Speaker, that it should be brought to this House if you have an open-door policy?

Speaker, lastly the refusal to grant access to resources such as farmland perpetuates a cycle of economic dependency and limits opportunities for full ownership and autonomy. There are two farms under your ownership, Premier, as the Western Cape Government, Waaikraal and Amalienstein.

Now you claim that your commodity-approach is the best, the best in the country. Why is it then that you fail over and over and over again when it comes to Waaikraal and Amalienstein, two communities of that particular area, Dysselsdorp and Zoar, have been promised those farms, and up till now they are not benefiting from those farms. Has it become a milking cow is the question that we should ask?

Furthermore the lack of transparency surrounding the farm evictions underscores the urgent need for comprehensive data collection and proactive measures to protect the rights and livelihoods of vulnerable rural communities.



I thank you, Speaker. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Mr P MARRAN: Speaker, also, the ANC does not support this budget.

[Interjections.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Ja, we cannot support that.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Marran. [Interjections.] Order members!

Ms R WINDVOGEL: It is a poor budget.

The SPEAKER: Order members! The next member is hon Cassiem on the virtual platform. Hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, it is sad that more than R1 billion is allocated to the Department of Agriculture in the Western Cape while agriculture is one of the most unequal sectors in the province which is dominated by White people to the disadvantage of all other racial groups. This Department, Speaker, under the instruction of the DA, continues to use taxpayers' money to assist White farmers to become richer, as agriculture in the Western Cape has a massive red tape and is moulded in such a way that African and Coloured populations remains limited.

Speaker, at the heart of denying the Black population access to the agricultural land in the province lies the issue of land and as long as African and Coloured people in this province are denied access to suitable farming land, the inequality, poverty and starvation will continue amongst these previously disadvantaged groups.

This Department has the means to acquire land and lease it specifically to emerging Black farmers. Since the Department always hide under the fact that its land redistribution lies with the National Government and the Department does not have power to delegate to the Province, but, Speaker, when we raise the issue of poverty, unemployment and food security amongst the poor, we are always told about how the Province runs an effective food garden scheme where they assist communities to plant spinach in the back of their yards.

Speaker, the sad part is when it comes to Black people and the issue of agriculture is raised, we are always told about backyard food gardens, but when it comes to White people, Speaker, we are told that the Department spend millions of rands providing water, machinery, fertilisers to the farmers, among others in order to farm and produce exports so they can become millionaires and create employment.

Speaker, when the Department speaks about employment within the agricultural sector in the Western Cape it is basically speaking about those part-time opportunities afforded to seasonal workers who get paid below the

minimum wage and are often subjected to the abuse by White farm owners. The issue of Coloured and Black people to concentrate on food gardens, Speaker, and then take taxpayers' money to spend it on already rich White farmers, it is the reason why inequality, poverty, unemployment and food insecurity will never cease to exist in this province.

In conclusion, Speaker, it can very well be true that the Province does not have land redistribution powers, but there are other mechanisms that can be used to assist Black people to enter into the agricultural sector. The Department can easily use its own budget, Speaker, to acquire parcels of agricultural land owned by itself and National Government in the province, as well as buying land that is held in private ownership and then make it available to Black emerging farmers in the province, Speaker. It is not true that the Provincial Government cannot engage in this stance and therefore we reject this Bill. Thank you, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Cassiem. Hon members, the next Speaker is hon Little. I wish to remind members that this will be the hon member's Maiden Speech and as parliamentary convention, no interjection at all will be allowed. Hon Little, I recognise you.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for that. I hope I get extra time as well.

The SPEAKER: Unfortunately not.

Ms S LITTLE: I thank you very much, hon Speaker, for this opportunity and first of all I would like to congratulate all those that are in the House for their achievement because it is a rare opportunity to see people achieve, so we would like to congratulate those. However, one must look at the situation that we are faced with in this province, that 1% of the agricultural land in the Western Cape is in Black hands. The rest unfortunately is in White hands...  
[Interjection.]

†Me A BANS: Dit is waar.

[Ms A BANS: It is true.]

Ms S LITTLE: And we see the inequalities in the budget that we have in front of us and one must always follow the money, because the money will tell you the truth as to how it is achieved and what it is that we must achieve.

I have heard about that this House or this Province is not responsible for land restitution or not handing over farms, but many of these farms are in municipal hands and this Province actually has control over those municipalities. Why have we not seen the transfer of those farms into Black hands, because if we were serious about the security of food, if we are serious about making a change in this province we would have seen that transfer and to bring things into a restored situation within this province.

However, nothing in this budget addresses these inequalities. The same can be

said about the lack of budget allocated in recognition, enabling and promoting women. So let me show you how my statement is justified. If we look on page 1551, we will see that R154 million is allocated to Administration. That means that that money is allocated to the MEC's office and under his control. However, Education and Training is only R58 million, so the seriousness about bringing about change, is the Minister's office, Mr Speaker, and so we would ask... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Little, can I please ask you to conclude, your time has expired.

Ms S LITTLE: It is so unfair, Speaker, but I will accept it. Thank you so much. [Time expired.] [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Without going into the detail it is proportionately allocated based on the election results and the amount of seats that you occupy in the House. I now recognise the hon Van der Westhuizen.

Mr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: Hon Speaker, hon members, the proposed budget for the Department of Agriculture is again an example of a budget that on face value seems to represent an increase in real terms, but due to the salary increases in the public sector it is indeed not the case, and again we have an example of a department that must do more with the same amount of money, or in this case less than in previous years. The budget is R1 018 500 000 (one billion and eighteen-point five million) a sizable budget but it has not grown

in line with inflation and the demands that have been put on the Department.

The Minister referred in more detail to the figures in the budget. I do not want to repeat those. The single biggest amount amongst the various programmes of the Department is for the support and development of agricultural producers, or in everyday language, support to our farmers, both established farmers but particularly also new and emerging farmers, and it will come as no surprise that it is our emerging farmers that rely most on the advice and other means of support organised by the Department's extension officers.

Again this Department is doing its best to close the gap and to bring emerging farmers as quickly as possible to full commercial status, and again while the budget is not broken down into the time spent with established and emerging farmers, I assure you that the emerging farmers are getting the lion's share of the support. Whenever we at the Standing Committee on Agriculture met with first generation farmers they expressed their gratitude for the immense support that they received from the staff of the Department of Agriculture.

It is of great importance to all of us that our various agricultural sectors remain competitive and when I say "competitive" I mean internationally competitive, and that we make the most of what we have. Competition in agriculture drives prices down and allows people to then eat healthier and live healthier lives, and we unfortunately cannot deny that so many South Africans still live with incomes below the red line, or that 27% of children in this country are stunted and fail to develop normally due to malnutrition, which again just underscores

how important agriculture is. Fortunately South African farmers are highly productive and mostly able to compete with other countries' farmers and remember that many, if not most, first world countries subsidise their farmers to remain on their farms and to be internationally competitive. The fact that South African farmers across various sectors remain internationally competitive is not due to our National Department, but I want to say it is despite the challenges or hurdles that the South African Department, National Government is putting into farmers' way to succeed. We really need to take our hats off to our agricultural sector.

I am going to mention just nine of these hurdles and increasing threats to agriculture in South Africa.

The first one, and the MEC also referred to this, is loadshedding. We have seen severe and intensifying loadshedding and our electricity prices have increased considerably over the last few years, increases much higher than the inflation rate and making the cost of producing food higher.

Criminality is the second one that I want to mention, and I find it ironic when Opposition speakers blame the Western Cape for our Safety Plan, etcetera, when it should have been the responsibility of the National Department of the South African Police Service to ensure that farmers and their workers are all safe. Criminality is on the rise and farmers need to spend increasing amounts on the security and on doing the work that the South African Police Service is supposed to do, and the hon Marran just referred to the private security guards

in De Doorns which transgressed the law.

Again, they should not have been there, their services should not have been needed, it is the National Department of Home Affairs that should be checking on work permits and it is the National Department of Labour and Employment that should go around and also inspect the sheets, the wage sheets of those employers. Again it is the National Department and how ironic that the Opposition then comes and complains that the Western Cape is not doing good enough, that we are not picking up the failures of the National Government.

May I also just remind you, our ANC colleagues, that they were warned when the Commando System was scrapped some 20 years ago that criminality would increase. We were promised that it would be replaced by Sector Policing which was supposed to be a more effective system – another set of false promises that was sold to us.

†En dit is dikwels die nuwe boer, die ontluikende boer wie se planne die meeste in die wiele gery word wanneer sy pomp en sy kragkabels gesteel word. [And it is often the new farmer, the emerging farmer, whose plans are thwarted the most when his pump and power cables are stolen.]

†Me R WINDVOGEL: Of 'n swart boer.

[Ms R WINDVOGEL: Or a Black farmer.]

†Mnr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: 'n Kommersiële boer met eiendomsreg op



sy plaas kan dan na 'n bank toe gaan en gaan geld leen en sê: "Ek het dringend nodig om my pompe weer aan die gang te kry om my bome nat te lei," maar 'n boer wat deur grondhervorming op 'n stuk grond geplaas is waarvan hy nie die eiendomsreg mag kry nie, het nie daardie ruimte om na 'n bank toe te gaan om die skades – 'n gebreekte pomp, 'n gesteelde kragkabel of ander, 'n trekker wat gesteel is – om dit te kan vervang en geld daarvoor te gaan leen nie. Hulle is in 'n veel slegter posisie as wat hulle sou wees onder DA beleid.

[Mr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: A commercial farmer with property rights on his farm can then go to a bank and borrow money and say: "I urgently need to get my pumps running again to water my trees," but a farmer who has been put on a piece of land through land reform of which he may not receive the property rights, does not have that space to go to a bank to replace the damage – a broken pump, a stolen power cable or other, a tractor that was stolen – and borrow money for that. They are in a far worse position than they would have been under DA policy.]

The ANC Government changed the staff-learner ratio for schools and they no longer distinguish between rural and urban schools, so many of our rural schools had to cut back on their curricula, more so in other provinces, but also so in the Western Cape. So now farmers have got this added expense of transporting their children to schools far away when for many, many decades they were able to have their children put in a school hostel much closer in that well-run rural school.

A fourth hurdle that farmers now need to cope with is the fact that on many

train lines, many railway lines trains are no longer running and our roads are deteriorating as a result of this. In the past many smaller towns were serviced by goods trains transporting agricultural produce to markets and buyers, yet, we all know how the railways have been mismanaged and how that service disappeared on many railway lines, and farmers had to switch to road transport for all their transport needs and in many provinces in South Africa the roads have become marked with potholes causing damages to vehicles as well as to their sensitive freight.

I can also refer to the closing of Post Offices mostly in rural towns. We know how many have closed down already and over the weekend it was reported that another 235 Post Offices have been earmarked to close, and again it is mostly our smaller rural towns that suffer where Post Office staff are now being retrenched, again poorly managed by the National Government.

I can refer to the congested and poorly managed ports and it has already been referred to in this debate. We all know about the challenges in our ports, how fresh agricultural produce are sitting in our harbours waiting to be loaded onto ships, but due to the ANC's Procurement Policy and general mismanagement, repair and maintenance contracts are given to companies that are ill-equipped to keep the enormous investment and infrastructure going, and while it may be true that the sensitive fruit and vegetables may not be rotting in Cape Town, it is a different story once it is on the sea and when these products arrive late at their destinations.

Colleagues, may I remind you of the importance of water infrastructure and water in itself for agricultural production and the hon Marran has just admitted that this is actually a national competency. The work on the Clanwilliam Dam to increase its capacity by a factor of 2,4 times is the responsibility of this National Department of Water and Sanitation. That project has been launched three times and I would not be surprised if it gets launched a fourth time before the elections. This project was supposed to be completed by 2015/16. We are now promised that it would be complete by 2029, some 14 years late, and as the hon Marran has said, 70% of the additional water, water licenses, water rights that will become available, have been promised to emerging farmers which means that for 14 unnecessary years emerging farmers have been denied the right to farm with water from that dam, again a failure from the National Government.

We have visited the biggest land claim in the Western Cape, that of the community of Ebenhaeser. They are at the far end of the canal system bringing water to places such as Vredendal. That canal should also be the responsibility of the National Department of Water, but who is giving money every year for the upkeep of that canal to restore infrastructure that actually should have been replaced many, many years ago? It is again the Western Cape Government because we know how important it is. The community of Ebenhaeser have the land but they need more water desperately. Again, it is the National Government that is standing in the way of unlocking the vast potential of the land of the Ebenhaeser community.

Speaker, I want to also refer to climate change and I will be expanding somewhat on the challenges brought about by climate change in the later debate on the Department of Environmental Affairs, but we all know that the ANC Government is extremely slow to replace our old inefficient and damaging fleet of coal powered power stations with clean renewable sources of energy. Again it is the general public and particularly farmers and industrialists that invest in rooftop solar installations.

I am the first to admit that we still do not know the full extent of rising ocean temperatures on our climates, but what we do know is that this will lead to more extreme weather conditions and these will hit us more regularly, and farmers are unable to insure themselves against floods causing erosion, damage to farm roads and the closure of other roads that cut them off from their markets. It is predicted that some areas may suffer from more regular occurrence of droughts while others may see an increase in tropical storms.

There are many more risks that farmers face but the last one that I would like to draw your attention to are the threats of expropriation, particularly its effect on farmland. The latest attempts to push through the Expropriation Amendment Bill with its clause containing nil compensation does very little to install confidence in South Africa as a place to invest. There are numerous examples of other countries where agricultural land was taken without compensation and in all these cases agricultural output has dropped to the detriment of those countries' economies, and you can go and see for yourselves and you do not need to go further than one of our neighbouring states. It has been the poor

that eventually suffered the most. It has been the poor that had to leave their country of origin in big numbers looking for employment elsewhere, and there are many South Africans that feel that those foreigners are now taking the bread and the work opportunities from them.

Colleagues, and particularly our ANC colleagues, these are only a few examples of the many stumbling blocks that your party has put in the way of our farmers, and remember when farmers suffer, both workers and the poor that rely on healthy and fresh affordable food, suffer, and despite all of these, the South African agricultural sector has managed to grow and increase its production. Not only in its production for domestic use, but as the Minister has referred to, especially also in exports.

There is this saying of "adapt or die" and our Department of Agriculture is making us proud in the way that they are able to adapt. With the challenges experienced by many of our National Scientific and Research entities in South Africa, the demands on this Department's Research and Technical Development Division have increased tremendously. Yet due to budgetary constraints and other priority areas, the amount budgeted for this function unfortunately had to decrease. In monetary terms a slight decrease but in the light of salary increases and inflation it is a marked decrease in real terms.

The Western Cape has various climates within our borders and while there is a greater diversity of farming sectors while the percentage contribution of livestock farming may have decreased, our veterinary services provided an

increasing and unmissable service, whether in the form of advice or by studying the causes of death of animals, or providing vaccines, or by assisting with permits for the safe movement of animals and the export of meat, this programme is providing essential services. They are welcomed with open arms by livestock farmers.

†Agb Speaker, ek het skrams verwys na die getal skape in Suid-Afrika wat sedert 2010 stelselmatig afneem. Dit is vir my 'n bron van groot kommer en 'n duidelike bewys dat ons skaapboere swaar trek. As u wonder waarom dit so is verwys ek u na die hindernisse wat ek vroeër uitgespel het, die hindernisse wat die ANC-regering in boere se pad plaas. Tog is dit vir my opmerklik en 'n vreugde hoedat die kleinskaalse boer met vee, veral beeste oor die laaste jare uitgebrei het na areas wat tradisioneel gekenmerk is deur meer intensiewe boerdery, soos byvoorbeeld sigbaar in die gebied van die Kaapse Wynland Munisipaliteit.

Dit is vir my verder verblydend om te sien hoedat boere oorgeskakel het na nuwe sektore soos wildboerdery en dit is besig om nog verder toe te neem, onder andere in areas waar sekere boksoorte nooit vantevore voorgekom het nie, en verder, Speaker, die boere sê vir my ander maal dat een van die redes hoekom hulle oorskakel na wildboerdery is omdat die diefstal van skape eenvoudig hand-oor-hand toegeneem het, weereens 'n mislukking aan die kant van die Suid Afrikaanse Polisie om boere en hulle troppe veilig te hou.

Danksy inentings, behandelings teen parasiete en die siektes wat bosluise

oordra kan ons nou diere aanhou op plekke waar hulle jare gelede nooit gesien is nie. Dit is die taak van die Program Veeartsenykundige Dienste om vinnig en doeltreffend op te tree in die gevalle van ernstige pandemies onder diere en ek herinner u graag aan die herhalende voorkoms van Afrika perdesiekte, Afrika varkgriep, bek-en-klou seer en om van die baie, baie ernstige voëlgriep nie eers te praat nie. Hierdie program onder die Departement lewer dus uitsluitlik baie noodsaaklike dienste.

Die Program vir Landelike Ontwikkeling is 'n program wat die verantwoordelikheid is van die Nasionale Regering en dit is vir my jammer dat die agb Little wat uiteraard nou nie die geleentheid gehad het om haar baie lank te kon voorberei nie, weereens die Wes-Kaap blameer vir die ongelyke eienaarskap van plase, en ons erken dit is 'n ongelyke eienaarskap, en ons wil graag hê die profiel van ons boere moet baie vinniger verander as wat tans die geval is, maar vir haar om te sê 1% van plase is in die besit van Witmense en daarom is 99% van die grond in die Wes-Kaap – ekskuus. 1% is in die hande van Swartmense en 99% is daarom in die hande van Witmense, beteken dat sy nie die somme verstaan nie en sy besef nie hoe baie plase is eerstens in die hande van maatskappye nie, en 'n maatskappy het nie kleur nie. Sy besef ook nie hoeveel van daardie grond is in die Regering se besit nie. Al hierdie plase wat die Regering tot nou toe gekoop het om dan aan opkomende boere te gee is in die Regering se besit, en die Regering – ek weet nou nie of u die Regering wil beskryf as 'n Wit Regering of as 'n Swart Regering nie. My indruk is die Regering het ook nie kleur nie, so ek sal bly wees as u dalk so 'n bietjie meer sal gaan kyk na u somme in hierdie verband.

Ongelukkig, wat sien ons? Die begroting van die Nasionale Regering vir grondhervorming word ook dramaties teruggesny. Mens sou dink dat die Nasionale Regering al meer en meer sou doen om opkomende boere te help, maar wat doen hulle, hulle onttrek hulle steun en dit skep vir ons probleme, en ironies dan word die Wes-Kaap daarvoor geblameer.

[Hon Speaker, I briefly referred to the number of sheep in South Africa that have gradually decreased since 2010. It is a source of great concern for me and a clear proof that our sheep farmers are suffering. If you are wondering why it is so, then I refer you to the obstructions that the ANC Government is laying in the way of the farmers. Yet is it noticable and a pleasure to me how the small scale farmer has expanded with livestock, especially cattle, over the past years to areas which traditionally were characterised by more intensive farming, for example visible in the area of the Cape Winelands Municipality.

It is further gratifying to see how farmers have switched over to new sectors such as game farming and it is busy expanding further, amongst others in areas where certain buck species never appeared before, and further, hon, Speaker, the farmers tell me again that one of the reasons why they switch to game farming is because the theft of sheep simply increased rapidly, again a failing by the South African Police to keep farmers and their flocks safe.

Thanks to vaccinations, treatments against parasites that ticks transfer, we can now keep animals in places where they were never seen years ago. It is the task of the Programme Veterinary Services to act fast and efficiently in cases of



serious pandemics amongst animals and I would like to remind you of the repeating occurrence of African horse sickness, African swine flu, mouth and foot disease, not to even mention the very, very serious bird flu. This programme of the Department therefore delivers exclusively very necessary services.

The programme for rural development is a programme that is the responsibility of the National Government and it is a pity that the hon Little who now did not have the opportunity to prepare herself for very long, again blames the Western Cape for the unequal ownership of farms, and we admit the unequal ownership, and we change much faster as is currently the case, but for her to say that 1% of farms is owned by Whites and therefore 99% of the land in the Western Cape – I beg your pardon. 1% is in the hands of Blacks and therefore 99% is the hands of Whites, means that she does not understand the sums and she does not realise how many farms are firstly in the hands of companies, and a company does not have a colour. She also does not realise how much of that land is owned by the Government. All these farms that the Government has bought up to now to hand over to emerging farmers is owned by the Government, and the Government – I now don't know if you want to describe the Government as a White Government or as a Black Government. My impression is the Government also does not have a colour, so I would be glad if you perhaps can go and look at your sums in this regard.

Unfortunately, what do we see? The budget of the National Government for land reform is also cut dramatically. One would think that the National

Government would do more and more to assist emerging farmers, but what do they do, they withdraw their support and it creates problems for us, and ironically the Western Cape is then blamed for that.]

As a former educator, I am particularly proud of this Department's initiatives to provide training, not only through a farmers' base, but also full-time training, dedicated training particularly to empower the youth.

Ms A BANS: Responsibility.

Mr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: We are justifiably proud of the work done by the Elsenburg Training Institute and an amount of R58,4 million has been budgeted for Agricultural Education and Training.

Now let me just quickly turn to the speech of the hon Marran who has really again blamed us for a number of mandates which is actually the mandate of the National Government.

I have already referred to his complaint about the private security that has been transgressing the law and that caused the death of a South African citizen. Again, as I have said, this is absolutely related to the failure of the South African Police Services. Then there is also his criticism about the unsafe conditions in which many farm workers are being transported.

†En dit is waar, baie van ons plaasmense word nie in wat ek sou sê in "dignified" voertuie vervoer nie. Baie van hulle word op oorlaaide voertuie vervoer, maar ek het geskryf, na aanleiding van hierdie Komitee se studie in terme van die vervoer van plaaswerkers, vir die Nasionale Minister van Vervoer, ons het vanuit die Wes-Kaap sekere voorstelle gemaak soos onder andere spoedbeheer op voertuie wat mense agter op oop voertuie vervoer. Ek wag tot vandag toe vir 'n reaksie van die Nasionale Minister van Vervoer.

Dit is die Nasionale Regering wat uiteindelik vervoerregulasies daarstel vir die vervoer van mense, vir die padwaardigheid van voertuie en so meer.

Die agbare Marran wil graag dat die plase Waaikraal en Amalienstein wat ekonomies nie op hierdie stadium vatbare plase is nie, dat hulle net so aan hulle plaaslike gemeenskappe oorhandig moet word. Wel, ek kan maar vir u verwys na byvoorbeeld Elandskloof waar die agbare Marran onlangs gekom het om sy voertuig te gaan haal na 'n jaar daarso. Sy voertuig het net so verwaarloos soos die plaas waarop hy gestaan het, want weereens, dit is 'n plaas wat deur die Nasionale Regering eenvoudig vir 'n gemeenskap gegee is en dit kan die Nasionale Regering nie traak dat daardie plaas intussen tot 'n ruïne verval nie.

Ek verwys hom graag na die plaas bekend as Proefplaas ook net buitekant Citrusdal wat die eiendom is van die Nasionale Regering, eens 'n pragtige proefplaas met alle fasiliteite, alle infrastruktuur met hoogs produktiewe sitrusbome daar. U moet tog as u op die N7 ry kyk wanneer u op die linkerkant

aan die ander kant van Citrusdal 'n plaas sien waarvan 'n klomp sitrusbome doodgegaan het... [Tussenwerpsel.]

As u wil sien waar die skure se deure afgesteel is, dit is die eiendom van die Nasionale Regering wat hulle eenvoudig net – die Engelse woord – *abandon*, hulle het dit net gelos en weggegaan en uiteindelik is daardie mense wat daar bly gefrustreerd en uiteindelik het hulle nie water vir die bome nie, uiteindelik het 'n produktiewe proefplaas verval tot 'n absolute ruïne. Dit is nou dieselfde, agb Marran, wat vir die Wes-Kaap wil kom sê maar as ons geld kan gee vir landelike veiligheid dan moet ons ook geld gee vir grondhervorming, maar ons kan nie alles wat die Nasionale Regering opmors in die Wes-Kaap regmaak nie, en as die agb Marran vir ons so graag wil help dat ons moet inspring in die Wes-Kaap, help ons met goed soos die Western Cape Powers Bill, help ons om ons hawens, ons treine en 'n klomp van ander infrastruktuur weer op dreef te bring. Ons kan dit beter bestuur as wat die Nasionale Regering dit doen en ek dink ons *track* rekord, ons geskiedenis in hierdie verband is tog baie duidelik.

Speaker, dit was vir my 'n besondere voorreg om die afgelope vyf jaar te kon dien as Voorsitter van die Staande Komitee verantwoordelik vir oorsig oor hierdie Departement van Landbou. Die taak was aangenamer gemaak deur die uitstekende werk van die Departement; in hierdie tyd uiters bekwaam gelei eerste deur me Joyene Isaacs en tans deur Dr Mogale Sebopetsa. Baie dankie vir u en u amptenare se uitstekende werk.

Baie dankie aan Minister Meyer wat sy taak as politieke hoof van die

Departement van Landbou met groot toewyding en entoesiasme – mag ek sê soms oorweldigende entoesiasme – aangepak het, en u hoef maar net vanoggend hier buite, buite die voordeur te gekyk het na die uitstalling van die Departement se dienste om daardie entoesiasme aan te voel.

[And it is true, many of our farm people are not transported in what I would call “dignified” vehicles. Many of them are transported on overloaded vehicles, but I have written, as a result of this Committee’s study in terms of the transport of farm workers, to the National Minister of Transport, we have made certain proposals from the Western Cape as for example speed control on vehicles transporting people on the back of open vehicles. I’m still waiting today for a reaction from the National Minister of Transport.

It is the National Government who eventually establishes transport regulations for the transport of people, for the roadworthiness of vehicles and so on.

The hon Marran would like the farms Waaikraal and Amalienstein that at this stage are not viable farms to be handed over to their local communities just like that. Well, I can refer you to for example Elandskloof where the hon Marran recently arrived to fetch his vehicle after a year out there. His vehicle has deteriorated just as much as the farm he was standing on, because again, it is a farm that was simply given to a community and the National Government can not be bothered that that farm has in the meantime fell to ruin.

I would like to refer him to a farm known as Proefplaas also just outside Citrusdal that is the property of the National Government, once a beautiful

experimental farm with all facilities, all infrastructure with highly productive citrus trees. You should really look when you drive along the N7 on the left on the other side of Citrusdal to see a farm of which a lot of citrus trees have died... [Interjection.]

If you want to see where the sheds' doors have been stolen off, it is the property of the National Government that they simply – the English word – “abandon”, just left it and went away and eventually those people living there are frustrated and have no water for the trees, eventually a productive experimental farm has lapsed into a absolute ruin. This now the same hon Marran, who wants to come and tell the Western Cape but if we can give money for rural safety we then also have to give money to land reform, but we cannot fix everything the National Government messes up, and if the hon Marran wants to help that we should jump in in the Western Cape, he should help us with things such as the Western Cape Powers Bill, help us to get our harbours, our trains and a lot of the other infratructure going again. We can manage it better than the National Government does it and I think our track record, our history in this regard is very clear after all.

Speaker, it has been a special privilege over the past five years to serve as Chairman of the Standing Committee responsible for the oversight over this Department of Agriculture. The task was made more pleasant by the outstanding work of the Department; during this time ably led by firstly Joyene Isaacs and currently by Dr Mogale Sebopetsa. Thank you for your and your officials' outstanding work.

Thank you to Minister Meyer who tackled his task as political head of the Department of Agriculture with great commitment and enthusiasm – may I say sometimes overwhelming enthusiasm – and you only have to look outside this morning, out the front door at the exhibition of the Department’s services to feel that enthusiasm.]

†’n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor!

[An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!]

†Mnr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: Ek wil ook graag sê baie dankie vir die steun vir die lede van die Staande Komitee oor politieke grense heen. Hierdie lede se gewilligheid om oor lang afstande te reis om hulle toesigfunksies te vervul is regtig ’n riem onder die hart gewees.

Speaker, die Staande Komitee vir Landbou beveel daarom by die Parlement aan dat u die begroting vir die Departement Landbou soos voorgelê heelhartig sal steun. Ek dank u. [Applous.]

[Mr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: I also want to say thank you very much for the support of the members of the Standing Committee across political boundaries. These members’ willingness to travel great distances to do their oversight function has been very heartening.

Speaker, the Standing Committee for Agriculture therefore recommends to Parliament that you wholeheartedly support the Budget of the Department of

Agriculture as tabled. I thank you.] [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, †agbare [hon] Van der Westhuizen .  
Hon Minister, Minister Meyer.

†'n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor!

[An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Agb Speaker, ek het besluit om nie op alles te reageer nie maar op slegs 'n paar sake wat ek dink uitklaring nodig het.

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, I have decided not to react to everything but only a few matters that I thinks need clarification.]

The CFO has now reminded me, to hon member Little, firstly, welcome to this House and we wish you a happy, productive stay in this House. This is the only functional Provincial Legislature in South Africa and your contribution is welcome in this particular regard. I am happy that you are here, just one correction, because my wife is in the House and you mentioned now a budget that I have. If she hears now tonight that I have this big budget I am under stress, so this budget that you spoke about that I apparently have, the CFO corrected it, it is the budget for the Office of the Minister and the Minister has staff. He has vehicles. He has an office. He has furniture. He has to pay the bills, the municipal, internet, security, maintenance at Elsenburg, all of that is under that budget, but Programme 2, hon Speaker, to honour member Little, Programme 2 is a total of R154 million. That CoE, R92 million, that is not in



the Minister's Office. There is also Goods and Services of R54 million, obviously not in the Minister's Office. There is a Capital, R3,5 million obviously not in the Minister's Office, and there is Transfers R4,9 million, obviously not in the Minister's Office, because if these things are in my office, I would have to go to that office rather soon... [Laughter.]

So, it also includes Corporate Services, R61 million, and Finance, R52 million, and I think just that correction so that my wife is not putting me under pressure when she hears that I have this big budget. So thank you for the opportunity to rectify it.

But, hon members, the issue of agri workers that are... [Interjection.]

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

Ms M MASEKO: No Speaker, I just want to find out...

The SPEAKER: Why are you rising then?

Ms M MASEKO: I just want to find out if the Minister can take a question.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Minister, are you prepared to take a question?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, I normally do not do it, but since she asked me so nicely I am happy to take a question.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Maseko. The Minister is prepared to take a question. You can pose a question to the Minister.

Ms M MASEKO: I thank you, Speaker, and also thank the Minister for taking the question, as I asked nicely. Minister, hon member Marran mentioned that you are the most senior member in the Legislature, and rightfully so. Now I want to find out as a senior member in the Province, will you avail yourself to take a position of the National Minister of Agriculture in the Union Buildings after the elections? [Laughter.] I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Maseko. Order members! Order members! There was a question posed to the Minister. Minister, how do you respond to that question? I will not dictate.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, I first have to consult my wife, because I am married in community of property, but if my wife agrees tonight that I must take up my position as National Minister of Agriculture in the Union Buildings after the election... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP: Yes, yes.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: And if that is the wish of my members

of my caucus, I will certainly consider it after consultation with my wife.

†n AGBARE LID: Aitsa!

[An HON MEMBER: Hallo!]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: And if that is certainly really after the election, I am looking forward to serve the farmers in South Africa.

†n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor! [Applous.]

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

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. You may continue.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, there was also a reference to the situation of farms. Apparently there is only 1% of the farms that is in White land, hence I think this is a Parliament, everything that is mentioned here are documented in the Hansard and it becomes the official documents of this Parliament. So if there is an untruth, it is my duty, my responsibility to uphold the Constitution and rectify the information that was not correct.

So, I will do that now. I want to inform this House that over the period from 1994 till 2024 this year, 10,2% of privately owned White land has been transferred in this province to Black ownership in the Western Cape, so that is now in the record, no other half-truths can start.

Mr P MARRAN: How much? How much?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: 10,2%, hon.

Mr P MARRAN: But when I asked you about how many, you said you do not know.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: No... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I told you I would come back to the House, I am now back.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr P MARRAN: I wanted the detail of... [Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I told you I am coming back.  
[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, order!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I am back.

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Marran, you had an opportunity to make your submission and to contribute to the debate, I allowed you the opportunity to do so and I protected you when there were interjections. Can I please caution you not to get into a dialogue with the Minister? The Minister is now responding to your input. If there is anything outside of this that you want to challenge you may do so over a cup of coffee, but not in this House. Hon Minister, please continue.

Mr P MARRAN: He is always lying...

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I said to the member at the time I do not have that information, I will come back to the House and today I am back, and I give the factual information.

To the hon member of the EFF, I do not know what to say, because the EFF really just wants to grab land and mess up the situation.

An HON MEMBER: Yes.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Well, I think we know in terms of the Constitution I took the Oath of Office. That member took an Oath of Office, hon member – through you Speaker – Ms Little, you took an Oath of Office. That oath said: "I will speak the truth, I will honour the Constitution and all

the Laws, and in terms of this law, land reform is a responsibility of the National Government, once they allocate the land we will provide post settlement support..." [Interjections.] ...which we do, but the National Government last year only gave R20 million for their budget to buy a farm, you cannot buy a farm for R20 million, and you want to empower Black people, †en dan steel julle die helfte.[and then you steal half of it]

It does not work like this, but I think there is a solution, a new Government is coming. I am no more worried about that, because a new Government will sort this out.

Mr P MARRAN: Hang on!

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Agb Speaker... [Tussenwerpsel.]

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker...] [Interjection.]

Mr P MARRAN: Not all the wishes come true!

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Agb Speaker, dankie aan agbare Andricus van der Westhuizen en sy Komitee wat hy met waardigheid en uitnemendheid gedien het oor die afgelope vyf jaar. Dit was vir my 'n plesier om voor sy Staande Komitee rekenpligtig te wees. Hy het ook gereeld, *in fact* van die meeste DA-studiegroepe het hy gelei en hy was besonders nougeset. Hy het waarde toegevoeg in daardie rol. Ek gaan hom mis en ek wens hom sterkte toe met sy volgende hoofstuk op sy lewenspad. Ek het baie by hom geleer, groot

waardigheid, 'n man met integriteit, en 'n man wat ek altyd binne die Parlement en buite die Parlement sal ondersteun. Ek wil ook die lede van die Amptelike Opposisie wat op sy Komitee gedien het bedank. Ons het nie altyd saamgestem nie, soos wat u nou kan sien, maar ons het mekaar met wedersydse respek behandel.

Ek wil in besonder ook vir agbare Peter Marais wat nie vandag hier is nie, van die Vryheidsfront, asook agbare Pat Marran van die ANC bedank. Dit is ook lede van ons Komitee, want ek het ook iets by julle geleer, ondanks ons verskille.

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, thank you to hon Andricus Van der Westhuizen and his Committee which he served with dignity and excellence over the past five years. It has been a pleasure to me to be accountable before his Committee. He has also regularly, in fact of the most DA study groups that he led, he has been very dedicated. He added value to that role. I'm going to miss him and wish him all the best with the next chapter in his life. I learnt a lot from him, great dignity, a man of integrity, and a man that I will always support inside Parliament and outside Parliament. I also want to thank the members of the Official Opposition who served on his Committee, we did not always agree as you have now seen, but we treated each other with mutual respect.

I want to especially thank hon Peter Marais who is not here today, of the Freedom Front, as well as hon Pat Marran of the ANC. They are also members of our Committee, because I have also learnt something from you, in spite of

our differences.]

Hon members, during my term I have also seen the commitment of Shoprite Group to farm-worker development. I want to thank them for supporting the Western Cape Prestige Agri Worker Forum as the main sponsor of the Agri Worker Competition.

I would also like to thank the Premier because I asked him to elevate the Agri Workers, I asked him can we on an annual basis meet the Agri Workers at the official residence of the Premier at Leeuwenhof. This year I have asked him can we induct the Farm Worker of the Year or the Agri Worker of the Year at Leeuwenhof, and I want to thank the Premier because he handed over the first jacket, also to the Chairperson, Wimpie Paulse, as well as to our Agri Worker of the Year, but I also want to congratulate Wendy – if you can please stand. Wendy Peterson is the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of SA Olives and I want to wish her well in that new job, and thank you, my job as the target I was given by the Premier is to grow agricultural exports and I am going to look to you to help me export olive oils and olives to the rest of the world. Thank you. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, every year the Western Cape agriculture sector meets at Bredasdorp for Nampo Cape. Thank you to all, especially Grape SA. They also have an exhibition downstairs, Bredasdorp, the sponsors of Agri, Overberg Agri and Cape Agulhas and the Overberg District municipalities. During my term as Minister of Agriculture in the Western Cape we had to respond to



Covid-19 pandemic, agriculture was declared an essential service and the agricultural sector had to work, and the agricultural sector thrived throughout the chaos. I want to put on record my deep thanks and appreciation to the citrus farmers because they also made a huge donation. I want to thank the NPO which is the Milk Producing Organisation because they gave 1% of their daily milk production for humanitarian relief, and I want to thank Dr Trautmann and Dr Sebopetsa because they also gave R100 000 value of milk from our two dairy farms, one in Elsenburg and one in Outeniqua also towards humanitarian relief during Covid.

Now many innovations emerged during COVID-19 and we witnessed the resilience of the sector. As a learning organisation we decided to document the experience of COVID-19 in agriculture and how it affected the industry, and so I want to thank our colleagues in the Department led by Dr Troskie and Mary and the team and everybody that contributed. The lessons of COVID-19 and how it impacted agriculture is now documented, because we are a learning organisation and it is called *"Abundant Harvest, Covid-19 Warriors Of Hope."*

This book documents the resilience of the sector and, Dr Mogale, if we can also give a few copies to the library because if the next pandemic comes then we have the solutions of hope.

Hon Speaker, next week I will meet the agricultural sector where I will table my full record of delivery for the last five years, but, hon members, I want agriculture in other provinces to also succeed. For this reason we took our

Sacramento Plan to the Agriculture MinMec. I want to thank Dr Trautmann and Dr Sebopetsa because we developed the Sacramento Agriculture Plan. I do not want the Western Cape to succeed only, I want South Africa to succeed, and for that reason I am so happy that the MinMec, the National Minister and all the nine MEC's have adopted our plan and have agreed that this is the way forward. [Applause.]

†n AGBARE LID: Ons luister!

[An HON MEMBER: We're listening!]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I want to thank – through you, Speaker, Dr Charles Wang from Taipei that is also present in the House here today. Thank you for your presence, thank you for your leadership. Thank you for discussions. Thank you for sharing the best practices, but more importantly thank you for assisting our staff to visit Taipei to experience innovation and technology, to experience trade relationships, and I want to thank you for your presence and your leadership in this regard.

Over the next few weeks South Africa will go to the polls and I am willing and able to help the new National Minister of Agriculture under a DA-led Government in the Union Buildings. [Applause.]

Over the last weeks I have been thinking how can I help a new Minister of Agriculture. I have been thinking deep. Thinking deep requires thinking, which is absent on the side of the House, thinking is a skill, so together with

my Cabinet colleagues we are working on a programme called Ready To Govern. South Africa needs change and change is coming.

For this reason, hon Speaker, I am now tabling in this House – can the Table assistant please collect it and to hand over to the Speaker. I am now handing over to the Speaker a Draft Job Description for the new National Minister of Agriculture in the Union Buildings, because it became abundantly clear that President Ramaphosa does not give guidance to his Ministers, they have no clue what they do. So this is the job description of a new National Minister of Agriculture and this House is making a contribution for the Union Buildings and that is the job description. [Laughter.]

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

Me A BANS: What an immense last speech!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: If the President Ramaphosa gave guidance, I would not have done that, but he is absent. He is nowhere. He is *Thuma mina*.

†Hy is bang vir Zuma. Sy twak is nat. [He's afraid of Zuma. His powder is damp.]

Hon members, I will also request the members of the prestige Agri Worker Forum to go out and read stories to children on farms. I want to thank them.

Thank you, Jackie, for sending me those videos of the agri workers. I have asked that they go to farms and read to farm workers. I want to thank the members who shared the videos with them, reading stories to children on farms. It has a huge impact.

†Agbare Speaker, ek wil ook my opregte dank en waardering uitspreek aan my Departementshoof, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa en sy hele bestuurspan. Sedert sy aanstelling het die Departement merkwaardig gegroei en ek dink agbare Van der Westhuizen het daarna verwys en ek is trots op Dr Mogale Sebopetsa se leierskap en saam met sy ADGs, Dr Darryl Jacobs en Dr Ilse Trautmann het die Departement werklik nuwe hoogtes bereik.

[Hon Speaker, I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my Head of Department, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa and his whole management team. Since his appointment the Department has grown remarkably and I think hon Van der Westhuizen referred to that, and I'm proud of Dr Mogale Sebopetsa's leadership and along with his ADGs, Dr Darryl Jacobs and Dr Ilse Trautmann, the Department really reached new heights.]

I am evenly thankful to Professor Johan Kirsten and his fellow Board members and staff at Casidra. As the shareholder I regularly meet with the Board. They are professional, diligent, and I want to thank the CEO Dr Keith du Plessis. If you can please stand – the Chief Executive Officer of Casidra, for his excellent leadership, his stabilising Casidra and improving good corporate governance and he is an excellent manager, outstanding leadership and a man that walks with his staff and the change that he brought about is remarkable, effective,

good corporate governance. I want to thank you. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, this Department – many years ago there was not a department like this and it was the Agri-Expo that created this Department. They initiated it and I want to ask Breyton Milford, the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager of Agri-Expo to please stand. [Applause.]

I am proud of his exceptional leadership, not only in the Western Cape Youth Shows but in the Agricultural Shows, but also in the South African Cheese Championship. Anybody that goes to the SA Cheese Championship knows he is the brains behind it. He and his team is working around the clock and I am so thankful that this year he also brought the South African Youth Show to Clanwilliam, and I visited him and he has done an enormous amount of work, because what he does is bring confidence to the sector. Confidence leads to investment, creates jobs and puts people into a safe space. Thank you, Breyton. [Applause.]

I would also like to thank our colleagues on XSIT, the false coddling-moth. If you can please stand. Thank you for the work. These colleagues are doing amazing work producing I think more than 50 million false coddling-moths, release it into the citrus farms. They are exceptional in what they are doing, killing insects and bacteria and all sorts of stuff that I do not understand. We made R2 million available. Thank you, Dr Sebopetsa, for that investment to citrus farmers, irrespective of your colour.

I did that because I understand the role of citrus in the world. South Africa is the second-biggest exporter of citrus fruit in the world per volume after Spain, so for us it is important to support the citrus industry, the biggest citrus industry in South Africa is in Limpopo. I want them to succeed. The second-biggest, I went there, is in the Eastern Cape. I want them to succeed. We are the third-biggest exporter of citrus fruit and I want to thank you for outstanding leadership. I told all the people from Asia, "Eat our citrus, Covid will go away." I thank you. [Applause.]

But colleagues, to table a budget you need support from members of your Cabinet. I want to thank firstly the Premier and my Cabinet colleagues for supporting the voice of Agriculture. My office is capably also managed by Ms Marietjie van Jaarsveld. She went about her task diligently and always walked the proverbial extra mile.

Thank you to Daniel Johnson, my Media Liaison Officer, and my private secretary, Charmaine de Vos, for the smooth operational support to me as the Executive Authority, but the most important person in my office is our kitchen executive, Mr Poole, Nicky Hill, she is excellent, and so too are the receptionist Zodwa, my registry clerk, Lesley-Ann Diergaardt and our personal assistant, Cleo. I also want to thank Petro van Jaarsveld. She is the assistant in my office as Leader of Government Business.

Lastly, Speaker, I want to thank my wife, Faiza, and my two sons. Without them it would not be possible for me to do this job. My wife ran a smooth ship

at home and I want to thank her for her loyalty, her love and compassion, but if I try to give her instructions she reminds me "You are the Leader of Government Business in Parliament, not here." She is in charge. [Applause.]

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

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Sy sit my op my plek.

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: She puts me in my place.] And, can I add, with a smile on the face. I want to thank my wife, but I also like to thank my friend for the last 30 years, Professor Sayeed Bayat, because he is a voice that I listen to, a voice of reason. I listened to him about many things, especially international geopolitics. I listened to him in terms of what is happening globally in terms of tourism. He always advises me about the latest research and I want to thank him for his loyal friendship for more than 30 years. But no-one can do the job without the help of God, so I want to thank God for guiding me, and Dr Sebopetsa, when we were faced with difficult budgetary choices.

I now call on this House to vote and support this Budget Vote 11, Department of Agriculture, and I also now call on members and staff to please visit the Agriculture exhibition downstairs under the arches. Please join us to see the fruits of the labour of the farm workers and our farmers and our producers.

Thank you, Speaker. [Applause.]

[Debate concluded.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the Debate on this Vote. The House will now be suspended until 14:00, so those will be suspended until 14:00 and then we will deal with the third Order of the Day, the Debate on Vote 10, Infrastructure. The House is suspended.

Business of the House is suspended at 13:17.

[House resumes at 14:00]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Good afternoon, hon members. I now recognise the hon Minister Simmers, that we begin the debate on Vote 10. I think, Mr Secretary, before you even jump up, hon Minister, can the Secretary please read the Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 10: Infrastructure – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2024].

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

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Premier, in his absence, members of Cabinet present here and



online, hon members of both sides of the House, my acting HOD and her team, who are also online, my Head of Ministry, Ms Vuvu Njalo, sitting up there, our guests in our gallery, and I will talk more about them in my speech, but also who are online and members of the media.

Today I present the Budgetary Priorities of the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure for the 2024/2025 financial year under the theme:

"Building tomorrow, investing in the progress of the Western Cape."

As we convene today to deliberate on the budget allocation for the upcoming fiscal year, I am reminded of the profound words, and I quote:

"If you cannot be the bridge that connects people then do not become the wall that separates them."

In this spirit of unity and progress I present the Budgetary Priorities of the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure for 2024/2025. Hon members, hon Deputy Speaker, this budget is targeted at lifting the people of the Western Cape out of poverty through investment in infrastructure.

I will now go to Programme 1 with a total budget of just over R372 million and as much as this programme is more focused on the administrative matters of my Department, it does contain a component which focuses on futuristic components as we prepare to propel this Department into the future.

I have chosen two specific elements within this programme which speaks to this future propelling: for the Masakh'iSizwe Bursary Programme we have allocated R12,756 million for 2024/25 fiscal year, noting we are the only province that has such a bursary programme. This figure has risen from the R12,208 million in the previous fiscal year.

Hon members, hon Deputy Speaker, through this programme, between 2019 to date, we have supported and helped no less than 865 young people to pursue their dreams of obtaining an opportunity to study into an infrastructure-led field at our partners in higher education institutions.

In our midst here today, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, I have actually invited some of our previous beneficiaries because I believe it is a very good story to tell. The first beneficiary is Allison Claassen. If she can just stand up, please. Thank you.

Hon members, Allison Claassen is from Saron, who passed with nine distinctions and currently is working at our Department's Transport Infrastructure branch, but what makes her story unique is that Allison was raised by her grandmother and she is indeed a role model for so many youth of Saron, and when I had lunch I asked her but what actually is her objective and she said:

"I am showing them that someone like them can obtain a degree in

civil engineering from a prestigious university while infiltrating a very male dominated industry. I want the youth of Saron to believe that it is possible to become a professional in this industry, and that is also why I want to work for the Department."

†Baie, baie dankie, Allison. [Thank you very much, Allison.]

Also here today and I would love her to stand as well. Yes, we do have female equipped individuals that we are empowering, here is Chantelle Lottering. I know Mr Mackenzie will love this because she is from Mitchells Plain, [Interjections.] and while she is equipping herself, what struck me the most of her story, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, she actually has bought her parents a home which they own for the first time in their lives when she became permanently employed in my Department, and again, what makes the story unique? She also grew up living in her grandparents' backyard in Mitchells Plain. †Niks is onmoontlik nie, ons moet net gefokus bly. [Nothing is impossible, we just have to stay focussed.]

Hon members, in terms of Programme 2, which is Public Works, we have a R2,4 billion budget, but for me the scourge of violence, violent crime and substance abuse, continues to afflict our society, robbing children and youth of their future and security.

Thus with the acting HOD and my Department, we prioritise the urgent maintenance of child and youth care centres across this province, Minister –

my colleague. That will ensure that through Minister Fernandez's Department the Western Cape Government can provide the necessary service of ensuring the safety and well-being of our vulnerable youth. Notably we will continue with the upgrading of facilities at the Horizon Child and Youth Care Centre.

R275,5 million of this would be towards the construction of our general public works projects. This programme of the Department, where we are the implementing agent, I need to emphasise, contributes towards the building and maintenance facilities to ensure that the residents of this province are provided with high quality healthcare facilities as well. And then something new to our portfolio, which is Energy, for which we have allocated a budget of R71,892 million for 24/25, and key projects slated for launch or whether it is progressed for this year's budget, include the Stellenbosch MIP Transactional Advisor Project, which is progressing well and aims to complete Phase 2, which is the feasibility study, in the first Quarter of 2024/2025.

The Stellenbosch Municipality will then be equipped with the results of a detailed, multifaceted, multi-disciplinary investigation to ensure, to look into the viability of a 50 megawatt power solar facility [Interjections.] which includes BESS, and, hon members, BESS stands for battery energy storage. Once that is complete, the Stellenbosch Council will then need to make a yay or nay decision to move to the formal procurement of the solution in a manner that is compliant with the relevant laws and regulations, to name but a few.

In the event of a decision to move forward, which I think we all hope they do,

all relevant procurement processes and documentation will be prepared for a request for proposal (RFP), which has a target date of 15 December 2024. It is pity the Leader of the Opposition is not here. That is one definitive timeline he can actually pencil down, †maar hy kom seker nie terug nie [but he is probably not coming back.] This project remains a first of its kind in South Africa and many municipalities are looking to this project to pioneer the way forwards.

The second component of this is the Stellenbosch Project Manager, which we have already appointed in 23/24 and he is actively supporting the MIP Transactional Advisor.

Then the project preparation facility, which also relates to the MIP Programme, and has been established to bring transactional advisory and other services to other municipalities in the Western Cape. The range of services which this will provide is very wide and it will be designed to match the anticipated needs of our municipalities as they seek to procure low carbon and renewable energy to support their customer bases.

Several municipalities have made applications to this facility already and projects are being developed in response to these needs, hon Deputy Speaker, and fourthly, through our Capacity to Implement Programme we are augmenting the skills, yes, within my own Department. Like I said we are preparing for the future in my Department so we can have access to suitably qualified and experienced engineers, and that covers a broad range of fields to

ensure that our programmes and projects I have highlighted, do move forward.

Then we were given the responsibility of grid infrastructure, and I am happy to report to the House today that our internal team has completed and will be doing so by the end of March, a detailed assessment of the grid infrastructure across the Western Cape. Our team is also being enhanced with external skills to augment the internal team needs, and last but not least, in terms of energy is the exploration options for Gas-to-Power, a project which has been completed and a detailed understanding of the options are available to the Province and has now been determined. These results now need to be studied and factored into the provinces which is our own integrated resource plan which is being run by the Department of the Premier's core energy team, and it is funded by the USAID South African Energy Programme.

Then we come to Programme 3, Transport Infrastructure, or as it is commonly called "roads", R5,186 billion and with an allocated budget of this amount, R1,22 billion will be for new and replacement projects because we aim to bolster transportation networks, Minister Mackenzie, and create job opportunities while we are doing so as well, and in addition, the notable projects for the year ahead are expected to generate employment opportunities for 1 676 job seekers. It will empower 137 local enterprises and it will ensure that 36 emerging businesses also get an opportunity.

I am just going to mention some of these key projects:

- Mariners Way, it is R290 million project.
- We are looking at the upgrading and the maintenance of the MR191. It is a R610 million project.
- Then there will be construction of the new corridor between the intersection of TR24/1 and TR25 to the existing Hopfield intersection at Malmesbury, my colleague at Local Government, at R529 million.
- There will be the upgrade of the TR28/2 between Stanford and Gansbaai, and the MR40/17, the cost of R386 million.
- Then we will be strengthening the Trunk Road 1 between George and Oudtshoorn. Again R230,8 million.
- We will also be doing period maintenance of the TR68 and TR69, which is the road between the Northern Cape border and Murraysburg, at R79,347 million.

As you can see, spread out across all districts across our province. These projects serve as a statement to the transformative power of infrastructure investment, demonstrating how strategic allocation of resources can unlock a myriad of cross-cutting opportunities through our projects.

In terms of Programme 4, Branch Human Settlements, hon member Lili, with a budget of R2,232 billion, and once again thank you for being the only ANC member to support a Vote in this House. It does note your commitment to infrastructure.

Since June 2019, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, our Department, which is now a branch, have disbursed nearly 6 000 First Home Finance subsidies. Most of you will recall the name FLISP would come to mind in the past. Providing housing opportunities to our citizens who earn between R3 501 to R22 000 per month, but what is unique of this figure is that it is nearly six times higher than the nearest performing province in terms of the affordable housing market segment. We are moving ahead at light speed to compare ourselves to other provinces.

Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, in this budget therefore focusing on the affordable housing market segment, we have allocated R100 million for this financial year for the First Home Finance subsidies. Primarily we will see 914 units being benefitted from this, following on existing developments which will yield 1 641 First Home Finance units in totality. These are Ebenezer in Bito, Mountain View in Mossel Bay, Syferfontein in George, [Inaudible], Malibu, Blue Downs, Our Pride, Forest Village, neighbourhoods in the City of Cape Town, but for the entire MTF, because as a DA-led Government we are committed to addressing the need for affordable housing, we have allocated a total of R340 million, which will be focused on further accelerating for the specific component of Human Settlements' needs across our province.



Hon members of the House, what many people in our province do not seem to know is the First Home Finance is now accessible for qualifying beneficiaries who utilise other sources of finance to acquire property, which means you can now engage beneficiaries who want to use their pension or provident fund to make a loan against it. We can now engage cooperatives or community-based saving schemes like stokvels, a first. We can now ensure that if you are a Government employee and you meet the criteria through the Government Employee Housing Scheme, we can assist you, and any other employer assisted housing scheme which we are aware of.

We are also aware that certain banks are now giving unsecured loans which speak to the need and the cost of the units in this market and also a pilot project which is going quite successfully across our province is the instalment sale agreement, or as I like to call it, the rent-to-own, rent-to-buy scheme.

Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members of the House, ensuring that nobody is left destitute during this Administration's office term to date, we have prioritised housing for over 800 beneficiaries with disabilities across 146 projects, demonstrating our commitment to inclusive and accessible housing solutions.

Hon members of the House, this commitment to include people with disabilities, backyarders and farm workers, was one of the first policy shifts I made when I came into office in 2019 and for far, because I believe for far too

long these groups were left with little reprieve when it came to Government subsidy housing opportunities.

So when it comes to beneficiaries who were previously backyarders we are the only province that can actually now provide you with that data since 2019. In the Overstrand region we have given homes and housing opportunities to no less than 1 865 backyarders. Phenomenal. It was never done before in that area.

These projects include the C1 in Zwelihle, Hermanus, Boston, Blompark and the Masakhane in Gansbaai projects. In Stellenbosch Municipality we have provided 193 opportunities to backyarders and farm dwellers. In Swartland Municipality where we have five projects, we have created housing opportunities for 249 farm dwellers and 959 backyarders, while in the Cape Metropole in the 23/24 financial year alone we delivered 375 backyarders with housing opportunities and 36 farm dwellers, as well as 944 from informal settlements. †Die getalle lieg nie, agb Adjunkspeaker. Hier is die feite, hier is die data. [The numbers do not lie, hon Deputy Speaker. Here are the facts, here is the data.]

†So die mite dat die DA nie 'n regering is wat omgee nie mag nou maar amptelik na vandag stop, en ek hoop ons partye dra ook hierdie korrekte data so oor aan hulle lidmate waar hulle gaan hierna. [So the myth that the DA is a Government that does not care may now after today officially stop, and I hope our parties also convey this correct data to their members where they are going after this.]

Furthermore, hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government has spearheaded the development of no less than seven social housing projects, offering nearly 2 000 housing opportunities in well-connected and secure environments. One such example of a beneficiary is Ms Ncgaba Picouri who is living in Maitland Mews Social Housing Development, which the National Minister and the Mayor and I opened earlier this year, and she underscores and thanked us for our dedications and I am going to actually quote what she has said. She said:

"I am very happy to have been accommodated here as it is 10 minutes away from my work. I am at peace knowing that I no longer must live in fear of crime as this facility is highly secured."

Again, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, contrary to our Opposition's claims that the Western Cape Government does not care about those living in the townships gripped by crime, Ms Picouri is from Philippi East, an area which your National Minister of Police, ANC members, the crime statistics show that it is one of the highest areas affected by crime.

However, this is all that we can do and perhaps you need to ensure that your Minister, who seems more like a statistician and reporter than the Minister of Policing, actually devolves that function to this capable province so we can actually deploy effective resources to that area.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I have noted that certain Opposition members have tried to play politics with this portfolio over the years, and particularly in the last few recent months. †Ons verstaan julle het verkiesingskoors, maar julle wil ook nie medikasie vat vir daai koors nie, dis baie gevaarlik. [We understand that you have election fever, but you also do not want to take medication for that fever, it's very dangerous.]

I am proud to share with the House that between 2019 and Quarter 3 of the 2023/2024 financial year, this Western Cape Government has created 43 870 quality housing opportunities, despite the many challenges we were presented with. I need to repeat, 43 870 quality housing opportunities, hon members.

Focus on the Inner City Programme. Our Better Living Model at Conradie site is advancing beautifully, hon members. While other provinces still dream and speak of designing smart cities, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, you will be glad that in the Western Cape we do not dream. This year we will continue to work on the Founders Garden Artscape Development Project, which is the second to follow the BLM principle.

Sadly again what is beyond my reach of control, this project was delayed by, among other things, the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) and the minimum specifications, which has now finally been updated for social housing.

We have updated our feasibility study and I believe that their Steering

Committee has recently just supported our recommendation for this project. †So alle wiewe gaan nou aan die rol vir daardie projek [So all the wheels are going to roll now for that project,] but what makes this project again a unique project is that the beneficiaries of the Founders Garden Artscape Development will be living on the footsteps of the CBD in the City of Cape Town. Again this is contrary to the myth which our Opposition in this House tends to say whenever they get the chance, because this will ensure that they can ultimately live in well-located areas in the City of Cape Town.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the financial year 2024/25, and there are really some key projects I do not want to lift out of my entire budget, because they will yield not only housing opportunities, they will not only yield service sites, but above all something which we have tackled in the previous financial year which is once again unique to our province, the installation of solar geyser panels which will ultimately target our elderly and our indigent households, because this programme seeks to uplift the quality of their life.

This pilot has been successful and which is why we will be extending the pilot into the following projects to ensure that we change those beneficiaries' lives as well:

- In Swellendam in Railton, we are on track to complete the 350 houses. All 350 will get solar geysers.
- If you are from Matzikama, to be specific Klawer, we will build 199

units and all of them will get solar geysers.

- If you are from the Metro Grounds in George, Phase 2 or another 120 of our units are nearing completion, which means we will install 200 solar geysers in that project as well.
- Then if you are from Vredewes, hon member Marran, in Witzenberg, you and I know the area very well, a 120 units are being built, are on track and Synthia Bes [0:22:26.4] will be one of the 354 beneficiaries which will also get a solar geyser on her house. †So jy kan maar die boodskap vir haar oordra, asseblief. [So you can convey this message to her, please.]
- In Hessequa in Melkfontein we will complete the first phase with 50 units and we will install a total of 300 solar geysers.
- In De Hoop in Swartland we will be servicing 982 sites. Thereafter construction will commence.
- Then in Bito Ebenezer we are on track to complete 154 houses and we will install 154 solar geysers on that project as well.

But, hon Deputy Speaker, like I said Human Settlements has challenges, even though we can deliver phenomenally as we speak. One of the biggest obstacles is actually electricity worsened by the energy crisis and also the failure of

Eskom in quite a few projects to actually ensure that they can install prepaid meters and actually activate electricity for these units.

So we cannot hand over those units even though it is complete, which is why the acting HOD and her team and I will actually be engaging the private sector to seek partners to work with us. †Ons kan nie meer vir Sieskom wag nie, ons gaan maar probeer 'n alternatiewe energiebron kry. [We cannot wait for Sieskom anymore, but we are going to try to get an alternative energy source.] Again that speaks to the failure of anything the ANC at a national level touches.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in 2020 when I raised the issue of the new phenomenon of acts of intimidation and extortion in the construction sector, I focused on our sites. I said that this was exacerbated by land invasions which at times were politically incited and motivated, building up to 2021, but the lasting effect will be for many, many years to come.

Some members in this House actually said I was trying to make excuses. That I could give no clear indication of where we were heading. They were actually in denial with what was busy happening on the ground, sometimes in their own constituencies, and over the years, hon Deputy Speaker, these acts have become increasingly common and violent, and as the Western Cape Government, as much as we seek to try to halve the violent crime rate with the devolution of SAPS, these are areas which we cannot properly focus on as a Department of Infrastructure, but the true cost of these criminal acts is what will stun the House this afternoon.

From August 2019 up until a week ago my Department has spent – this is just for security in its various forms – R840 965 000 to secure project sites and houses. That is nearly 40% of a total budget for branch Human Settlements. How many people's lives could we not have changed if SAPS were actually doing what they are supposed to be doing.

Then in terms of Programme 5, hon Deputy Speaker and colleagues, these Community-based Programmes, they have a total budget of R74,4 million. We have budgeted R4,6 million for contractor development because we foster contractor development as a department. One such example is Ms Georgina Diyosi from Somerset West who is, as we are speaking actually just started another job, but what stands out is the more we empower and develop our contractors, like Ms Diyosi, she is actually empowering more women in her company, which I think actually needs to be applauded because we are trying to bring women into the construction sector and playing their part in job creation.

So as much as we empower our contractors, and in this case female contractors, we also uplift the communities who they provide with a job opportunities and a better quality of life and put food on the table because can promote transparency and integrity in our procurement processes, so we empower them with how our processes work as well, ensuring equitable access and opportunities for all.



Then we also have R7 million for artisan programmes because ons moet die ambagsmanne van die toekoms oplei om die Wes-Kaap van die toekoms te help uitbou regoor die provinsie. [we have to train the artisans of the future to help build the Western Cape of the future all across the province.] Which is why today in the gallery I am joined by some of our successful graduates of the DEDAT Theory Training Apprenticeships Programme. One of them is Xavier Seedras, if he can just stand up. He completed his 3-year electrician apprentice programme and he is actually employed. So I do thank him for taking time off work. Again a product of our programme.

Alongside him is Yanga Mboweni who also completed a 3-year welding apprenticeship programme, but also is doing plumbing, I believe, at the moment. Again a product of our investment as a provincial government.

Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, as the former FNB CEO, Michael Jordaan, once said:

"Success is not about the destination, it is about the journey and the impact we make along the way."

This budget reflects the importance of investment in all forms of infrastructure and the long-lasting impact it has on the residents of this province.

As I conclude, hon Deputy Speaker, this budget reflects our Department's, by the DA as a governing party, of this province's unwavering commitment to

building bridges of opportunity and prosperity for all residents of the Western Cape, and together let us all strive for a future where no wall divides us, but rather where infrastructure serves as a pathway to unity and progress.

I would also like to thank or take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and thank you for the Premier *in absentia* for entrusting me with the mammoth responsibility of leading the Department of Infrastructure. To each official in our Department under the leadership of the acting HOD, Adv Chantal Smith, thank you for your tireless dedication and servitude, from Refresh 1 to Refresh 2, to accelerating now into the future, you are showing it can be done, but I cannot stand here this afternoon without thanking my family for their unwavering support and sacrifice. It is not easy leading the charge, but with their support it has become possible, but then because we spend so many times as politicians more with our office staff than our own family at times, I do want to thank my Ministry team.

They have been with me for the last five years and I do want to thank Vuvu, Ntobeko and the entire team. I do appreciate your collective efforts in driving the mandate of our portfolio. I can truly say that you are the best Ministry team any Minister could ever wish for. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. I now recognise the hon Lili.

Mr A LILI: Hon Deputy Speaker, esteemed members and the guests, I rise on

behalf of the African National Congress to reject the proposed budget. I never supported it.

An HON MEMBER: Never.

Mr A LILI: This budget not only falls short of addressing the pressing needs of the poor, but also exacerbates existing challenges through its short-sighted allocation of resources.

Hon Deputy Speaker, before I outline reasons for rejecting this budget, allow me to start by making a humble plea to hon Minister Kubayi to look into the R3 501 income threshold for the finance-linked individual subsidy, for the First Home Finance Programme, as it is referred to by this Department.

This programme continues to be a priority for the Department. This threshold was never increased in line with the minimum wage increased, now causing a situation where unless you are unemployed you automatically do not qualify for individual housing subsidy. This means our domestic workers, farm workers, etcetera, now do not qualify for a free Government house. This needs urgent attention of the Minister and it must be addressed urgently.

Hon Deputy Speaker, while the overall budget for the Department increases, we are deeply concerned with the 10,85% decrease in the allocation for the Human Settlements branch. The most affected by these cuts is the Human Settlement Development, which gets a 10,97% decrease. This will further

weaken the Department's ability to deliver houses in the province.

Due to this DA-led Government's inability to deliver houses, we have witnessed the housing demand that is a basic increase by 60%, 67% between 2013 and 2022, and now it stands over 600 000.

In response to this crisis the Department plans to deliver 8 937 housing opportunities in 2024 and 2025, as revealed in its Annual Performance Plan.

Whilst many families languish in overcrowded and inadequate living conditions, the pace of building houses for the poor remains slow. A lack of urgency in addressing this humanitarian crisis is nothing short of disgraceful.

Hon Deputy Speaker, alongside the ballooning housing demand database we have seen the proliferation of informal settlements in the province. According to the Western Cape Government's informal settlement database and supported by the Department's Strategic Plan 2023/2024, 2027/2028, between 2019 and 2022 there has been an increase of 29 764 structures in 27 new informal settlements within non-metro municipalities, and increase of 39 893 structures in approximately 172 new informal settlements within the City of Cape Town. Consequently there are 112 228 structures located across 417 informal settlements within non-metro municipalities and 269 811 structures located across 806 informal settlements in the City of Cape Town.

Hon Deputy Speaker, a question that lingers on everyone's mind is how did we

get to this crisis point? The answer lies in the fact that the number of housing opportunities declined significantly when the DA took over. When we governed we delivered on average of 30 000 housing opportunities each year. You can Google that fact. During Helen Zille's final year in office she delivered at least 16 7000 housing opportunities, which was half of what the ANC delivered. In Premier Winde's first year in office this number decreased to 13 808. In 2020/2021 it declined again to 11 451 opportunities and in 2021/2022 it further declined to 10 164 housing opportunities. In 2022/2023 only 6 610 housing opportunities were delivered, and in 2023/2024 only a clumsy 777 housing opportunities ...[Interjections.]

†n AGB LID: Wat?

[An HON MEMBER: What?]

Mr A LILI: ...had been delivered, until June 2023.

Not only have the housing opportunities declined, but the Department is also missing performance targets. The housing opportunities delivered between 2019 and 2022 were against the target of 16 209 in 2019, 14 203 in 2020, 14 506 in 2021 and 2022, and 11 210 in 2022/2023.

†Hon Deputy Speaker, njengomunye wabantu abaziyo intlungu yabantu bakithi, ohlala nabo ndihlala nabo nanamhlanje. Abahlala ebuqwayibeni bahlala ezimbacweni apho bangena manzi nazitoilets, indikhathaza kakhulu lento endiyibona apha. Ugulumende ongena nkathalo ngobomi bamhlweli ngakumbi

umntu omnyama. Wicacisa njan into ka gulumende ocwangcinswa uku akwa kwezindlu ezingaphansi ka mawaka alicoba ngonyaka kodwa kukho abantu abaninzi kangaka aba lindele izindlu? Abantu bakithi bayaphela yimlilo yamatsotsombe, balahlekelwa nazimpahla zabo zamacabiso ngelicesha ugulumende ulibele ukuphuca apha inene sasinyanisile eqesha bendikhokhela abahlali.

[As one of the people who knows the pain of our people, who live with them. I still live with them. They live in a cave where there is no water and toilets, it worries me a lot what is seen here. The government that doesn't care for the future, worse off the black people. Who do you explain government planned construction of less than 1,000 homes in a year but there are a lot of people waiting for houses? Our people are finishing of the fire in the caves they living in they lose their belongings meanwhile the government is busy reaping; indeed, we were right the time I was advised by the residents.]

There was a time where my enemies in 2012 decided to throw me out of the Council and some were within the DA. I composed a song out of bad living conditions of our people. †So ngithi sasikwenzeni... sasikwenzentoni ethili ukusiphatha okwezinja? uPremier makaphendule siyintoni na isono sabantu bakithi? Lento bangakhathelekekanga kangakakweliphondo? Umbuzo ubuzwa ngabantu base town 2 abalinde izindlu zabo ku Silver Town Emergency Housing Project ekade ihambela ndawo ngexa ye DA administration. Iseka ngumbuzo obuzwa ngintsapho zase Mangawung ezishiyeke zingena makhaya emva kokuba Umlilo utshise maqoqisa izindlu ezitshekelo kumakhulu amabili ushiya abantu abasondele kumakhulu amahlanu kuquka abantwana namahlekazana bedinga indawo zokuhlala. Siyambulela ugulumende

wezwelonke kwanye nombutho wa Gift of the Givers ngencaso abathe bayinika ezintsapho. Sicela ukukhumbuzaumphathiswa Khubayi ngesithembiso aweye esiyenzile sithi Housing Development Agency yiyo ezona noqanduva lokuphahlisa indawo ezaingama tsotsombe apha eCapa. Siyamcela ukuba asifezekise isithembiso ngokuba iDA yohlulakele mpela ngoba ngoku ibusy inikeza umhlaba amaZion ase Israel. Makuthathwe imali yonke inikwe iHTA .

[So, I am saying what did we do... what did we do that makes you treat us like dogs? Let the Premier answer what is the sin of our people? This thing of being ignored this much in this province? This question is asked by the residents from town 2 who are expecting their houses from Silver Town Emergency Housing Project which was in hand with the DA administration. This question is asked by the Mangawung families who are left with no homes after the fire burned two hundred houses leaves people close to five hundred including children and the elder people in need of homes. We thank the National Government and the Gift of the Givers Organization for the support they given this people. We would like to remind the Minister Khubayi of the promise he made of the Housing Development Agency which is the one responsible of ending the squatter camps here in the Cape. We ask him to fulfil his promise because the DA is really failing and busy offer land to the Zions and Israel's. All the money should be given to the HTA.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, the above failures are as a result of management inefficiency and poor leadership and should not be blamed entirely on extortion – and should not be blamed entirely, as I said also the hon Minister in that Committee led by hon member Maseko, that it cannot be blamed entirely on

extortion and community unrest as the Department purports.

The Department's Strategy Plan 2023/2024, 2027/2028, highlights extortion and construction mafia syndicate as a major risk, which have affected a number of projects in the province. Yet the Department's budget does not make any allocation to deal with extortion.

Lest we forget that the DA started, sustains this crisis by awarding lucrative contracts to companies with known links to gangs. Malusi Booi may be the fall guy, but the truth remains that the DA started, sustaining extortion in the province. [Interjections.] I know of many of gangsters who were given tenders and they are forcing our people to vote for the DA.

Alongside extortion, community unrest and protests are mentioned as another risk. Not only is the Department not making any additional allocation towards addressing this risk, it is weakening its capacity to deal with it by dismantling the project management office, by terminating contracts of all the experienced and hardworking staff members who were entrusted with the responsibility of dealing with community unrest and protests.

I believe that this decision is not carefully thought of ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Mr A LILI: ...and that the Department is shooting itself in the foot here.



The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member, your time is up.

Mr A LILI: I am looking at my minutes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am also looking at the time right in front here.

Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon member Cassiem.

Mr A LILI: But I only ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, I follow a time ...[Interjections.]

Mr A LILI: Are you sure?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: One hundred percent sure.

Mr A LILI: Alright.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Lili, for your indulgence, thank you very much. Hon member Cassiem, are you online?

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, yes, I am.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you. Hon Deputy Speaker, one should not be excited to see a budget allocation of R10,2 billion to the Department of Infrastructure as history shows that the bulk of this money will be returned to Treasury at the end of the financial year, with poor people continuing to remain without houses.

Hon Deputy Speaker, at the beginning of the current financial year the housing backlog in the Western Cape was sitting at around half a million. Not much was done to reduce this backlog and all we were left with is unspent funds which had returned to Treasury and told that a rollover request will be made.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Provincial Government under this DA leadership, has often demonstrated that it does not want spatial planning within the Cape Town Central Business District, or rather the CBD. All sorts of excuses have been made, advanced by this Provincial Government, together with this Department citing how expensive it will be to acquire land in the CBD.

Hon Deputy Speaker, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 this Department announced that it will quickly relocate people of Dunoon and Kosovo to Winning Way industrial park and better habitable environments. Since then and to date this Department has been providing one excuse followed by another on why the people cannot be moved.

The sad part is that if this Government cannot fulfil that which it has promised,

so what about those it has not promised anything to, but who rely on Government for the provision of land and housing?

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are living in an unequal society and people's means whilst access to housing for one can mean being provided with a whole house altogether, to another person with better means it might mean being provided with either land or housing material and then they can take care of the rest. In that way the Government will remain with more resources to help more, or less fortunate and the poor.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it will be two weeks now since I have written a letter to the Office of the Minister, hon member Simmers, asking his Department to intervene on matters regarding the provision of housing and my email has since been ignored by his office. In one matter his Department and the DA Government promised people houses around Mfuleni, just before the 2021 municipal elections. The Department even called them into a community hall and told them that they will be called in the first week of November 2021 to come and collect keys belonging to the allocated houses. However, hon Deputy Speaker, to date people have not received those houses as they were given or sold to different people altogether.

The second case which I have written to the Minister involved a pensioner whose house was never completed since 2010 to date. When other residents were given keys to move into their houses, this elderly woman's house remained incomplete until the project finished and left.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as I speak to you today the house remains without windows, without doors, plastering and a roof, among others. This granny is still residing in a nearby informal settlement which was engulfed by fire in recent times and she was one of the victims ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM: Hon Deputy Speaker, we reject this budget. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon member Maseko.

Ms M M MASEKO: Thank you, thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me start by acknowledging the Premier *in absentia*, the members of Executive and the guests both in the gallery and the virtual platform.

I just want to start by making sure that the members that were here yesterday, and I am definitely sure in their emails also, they received the Order Paper of the number 38 – 2024, Sixth Session, Sixth Parliament, the Parliament of the Province of Western Cape. The announcements of the Tablings and the Committee Reports that indicated that Vote 10 in this Government unanimously was voted in support from all parties. That, hon members, it is a fact.

So we do appreciate your support to the Vote 10 of the Department of Infrastructure. The unfortunate part of it, I am sitting here and I am listening to the hon member Lili who was in that Committee when he supported that Vote, but I do not blame him because I know my friend, hon member, through you, Marran, has an influence of refusing to agree even the good things that are in front of him until you convince him, but I will work with him to make sure that he supports that Vote also, so that member Lili can be comfortable in supporting like he did in committee.

So do not worry, I will work, through you I will work with him to support that Vote.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms M M MASEKO: Hon Deputy Speaker, I just want to say the cities are the foundation of our civilization and housing and infrastructure are the bedrock upon which they stand. They are not merely the bricks, mortar, roads, steel and pipes, they are the arteries and veins of society facilitating the flow of life and opportunity. Investing in housing and infrastructure is not just about erecting the buildings or laying down roads, it is about investing in the future, in the prosperity and well-being of generations to come.

Having joined this Committee in 2014 I have had the privilege of witnessing its evolution firsthand. As the senior member my channel has afforded me a

comprehensive perspective. Over the years I have observed Ministers and members demonstrating remarkable innovation and staff members tirelessly dedicating themselves to enhancing the lives of our residents and I am talking about the members from both sides of the House.

I have served on this committee with immense pride and I am deeply grateful for the collective efforts that have led to our accomplishments over the past decade. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all who have served alongside me during this time. Your dedication and commitment to our shared mission, hon members, always aiming to improve the quality of life for our residents, fills me with pride. I cannot say thank you enough, including the members of the Standing Committee, our procedural officer, Shumeeze Jones, our senior procedural officer, Johan Vermeulen, Lizette Cloete and also my personal researcher, Anton van Zyl, who has been just next to me throughout.

Reflecting on the past decade I found myself thinking about our Department's achievements and how they managed to excel. Intrigued by this thought I embarked on a research journey to explore the many accomplishments of our Department over the past 10 years. To my surprise the depth and breadth of the DA Government success filled me with the profound sense of pride and accomplishment over the past decade.

This DA Government has delivered 82 358 housing units, have delivered 105 381 service sites, delivered 10 371 individuals have benefited from the Enhanced Extended Discount Benefits Scheme, 1 200 individuals have recently

benefited from FLISP and 70 236 individuals have received title deeds. Still talking about the DA-led Government in the Western Cape. This equates to almost 270 000 housing opportunities delivered in just one decade.

Hon Deputy Speaker, consider this remarkable statistic, with an average household size of 3,3 in the Western Cape, the actions of this DA-led Government over the last decade have translated into providing proper housing to a staggering 889 502 residents. This means that nearly 900 000 individuals now have a place they can proudly call home thanks to the collective efforts of this Government.

By knowing this Government it is evident that we will not settle for complacency or merely bask in the past success. Rather we will recognise that despite the strides made the journey towards comprehensive improvement is ongoing. We acknowledge that there are still numerous milestones to reach and targets to exceed. Our commitment to progress remains unwavering, driving us to continually strive for greater achievement and better outcomes for all.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this comes from National Treasury. The Democratic Alliance-led Government in Western Cape remains resolute in its commitment to do more with less. Despite these challenges the Government persists in its mission to deliver essential services and uphold its responsibilities to the people, reviewing both the budget allocation and the Annual Performance Plan it is evident that this Government is undeterred and remains firmly on the right

track.

The alignment between financial resources and strategic objectives underscores the Government's dedication to prudent governance and the effective execution of policies even in the face of adversity.

In the 2024/25 Medium Term Expenditure Framework an allocation of R28,336 billion has been earmarked for the Department of Infrastructure. This substantial budget will be dedicated to the construction of vital infrastructure, including but not limited to housing, schools, hospitals and roads. These investments are crucial for the development and the well-being of our communities, ensuring access to the essential services and fostering economic growth and social progress across the province.

Just to pause, hon Deputy Speaker, this budget is about the people that are in need and people that are in need are the people in poverty and poverty does not have a colour, it does not have a Black, it does not have a White. Poverty is poverty. The need for this Government giving services to the communities in Western Cape, this budget is about every person that is in need.

So we do not have the backlog of the housing that is specifically for the Blacks or for the Whites or any other, or the Indians, we have a backlog that is ever increasing because this Government delivers and surely people will move in this province too so that they can have the opportunities to better their lives.



Now a total of R7,392 billion has been allocated for Public Works Infrastructure, dedicated to fostering a well-rounded Provincial Government building infrastructure. Under this comprehensive programme investments will be made in renewable energy, health and education infrastructure, with the focus on planning, construction and maintenance and operations.

The Provincial Public Works branch has initiated assessments of provincially-owned office buildings to determine the viability of hybrid energy solutions in order to reduce the reliance on the National Grid and the environmental impact of the use of diesel generators during loadshedding events.

When it comes to education infrastructure the delivery of infrastructure has two strategic objectives, namely increasing the number of public schools to meet the needs of a growing learner population, and secondly, ensuring that the conditions of the schools are fit for purpose to help ensure that education outcomes meet the needs and expectations of learners, educators and communities alike.

The Democratic Alliance notes and welcomes the various new schools that are nearing completion, namely De Waalville Primary School in Heidelberg, Waveren Primary School in Tulbagh, Macassar Primary School in Macassar, Happy Valley Primary School Number 2 in Blue Downs, Concordia Primary School in Knysna and Graafwater Primary School in Graafwater in the West Coast District.

The DA welcomes the two mega health infrastructure projects that are being planned for implementation by the Department of Infrastructure over the medium to long term to modernise the health system and improve healthcare. This include the Belhar and the Klipfontein Regional Hospitals. The delivery of health infrastructure aims to modernise our healthcare system and to help ensure that our people live longer and healthier lives.

Hon Deputy Speaker, every month thousands of South Africans move to the Western Cape in search of a better life and better opportunities. The state of dilapidated rail infrastructure in South Africa only further takes a toll on our road infrastructure. To combat this and to ensure that Western Cape roads remain the best in Africa, R13,225 billion will be allocated towards road infrastructure. 1,2 million square metres of surface roads will be rehabilitated and 8,1 million square metres of surface roads will be sealed. Some big road infrastructure projects include George Western Bypass, Cape Town Integrator, Northern Growth Corridor and Saldanha Industrial Development Zone road networks upgrades.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in our ongoing efforts to tackle the issue of an ever growing population, R6,462 billion will be allocated to Human Settlements developments. Over the 2024/2025 MTF 3 000 households will receive the subsidies through FLISP, 12 554 breaking new ground houses will be delivered, 12 632 service sites will be delivered and 14 300 title deeds will be handed over, and I just pause again on that one, hon Deputy Speaker.

The challenge is most of the time even the municipalities when they want to fast-track giving the title deeds, you will find that already the initial beneficiaries have sold their houses. So it is difficult for the municipalities and also for the Department to trace so that they can reach their target.

So I will request that the members in their constituencies, irrespective of your political ideology, let us try to educate our communities to make sure that when they receive those houses they must not sell them. It is an investment for them and it makes it difficult if they do not even have the title deed. At least they need to receive the title deed so that they can understand the worth of those properties as they are beneficiaries and as they receive them. Hon Deputy Speaker, this means that over the next three years, 140 204 people will benefit from some sort of Human Settlements development. R232 million will be spent on EPWP community-based programmes. The implementation of these programmes leads to the development and empowerment of communities.

The Democratic Alliance also welcomes the decision by the Department of Infrastructure to continue the Masakh'iSizwe Bursary Programme that provides bursaries for deserving students and improve skills, capacity and transformation in the build environment, engineering and related disciplines, and the professional development programmes to support graduates to become registered professionals with the statutory bodies that regulate their professions.

Lastly, this Department alone will facilitate the creation of more than 10 000

work opportunities. These work opportunities not only contribute significantly to bolstering our economy, but also serve as a catalyst for further reducing the unemployment rate in the Western Cape.

There are, however, elements of society that threaten progress and future development. This includes the lives of extortion mafias and land invasion. Acts of extortion in the Western Cape have interrupted about 25 Human Settlements projects between 2018 and 2022, affecting about 18 000 beneficiaries. While much is being done by the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure to ensure that construction projects are completed as quickly as possible, the Department is also intensifying its efforts in preventing extortionists from holding various construction projects at ransom.

Various strategies have been deployed by the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure to prevent extortionists from interrupting important construction projects. These strategies rely on closely working with the community leadership, projects steering committees, sub-council managers, as well as the ward councillors. The Department is also working closely with the SAPS, the Public Order Policing Services, as well as the City of Cape Town's law enforcement agents. All cases of threat, intimidation and shooting incidents are immediately reported and registered to the SAPS.

At the request of the Department a range of law enforcement agencies, including the SAPS and the City of Cape Town law enforcement agencies, conduct daily patrols at the various construction sites. In conjunction with

these efforts the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure has bolstered site security by deploying security personnel to different projects. In some cases specialised security services are engaged to provide an extra layer of protection, ensuring the utmost safety and conducive working conditions for the workers involved.

Currently the Western Cape Government spends about R1,5 million monthly on extra security at various construction sites. These extortion mafias do not just delay construction, but they are cold blooded killers who deserve to be put in jail. Last year they shot and killed three construction workers at a housing project in Delft and killed a City official at another construction site. So, hon member Lili, this is just not a fluke, it is the reality of what is happening. Through you, hon Deputy Speaker, this is just not a scam it is what is happening.

During a Sitting of the Western Cape Legislature on 1 June, Minister shockingly revealed that his Department has uncovered a deeply alarming trend. Since 2019 certain political parties have brazenly engaged in a calculated and coordinated campaign to encourage land grabs in the province, inflicting severe delays which affect approximately 21 000 beneficiaries. These political parties shamelessly instruct their members in these areas to obstruct Department officials from carrying out crucial assessments.

[The Speaker takes the Chair.]

This revelation also unearths a disturbing connection between certain political parties and the Safety Business Forums, shamelessly exploiting this acts to amass illicit funds from various sites in the Western Cape. The DA in the Western Cape has since called on South African Police ...[intervenes]

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

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): No, it is a request. I would like to ask a question. Given that she has got 33 minutes I am sure ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Okay, I will ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...part of it – ja.

The SPEAKER: Alright, I will ask them the member. Hon member Maseko, are you prepared to take a question from the member?

Ms M M MASEKO: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I do not deal with education. No, I am not going to take a question.

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

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): She must not make accusations here.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, the member is not prepared so you cannot pose it. Hon member Maseko, you may continue.

Ms M M MASEKO: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Maseko, please take your seat. Hon member Marran, is that a point of order?

Mr P MARRAN: She must withdraw those allegations.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Marran, is that a point of order? [Interjections.] It is not a point of order, you may continue, hon member Maseko.

Mr P MARRAN: Push her out.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Marran, I provided an opportunity for you. If you want to make an input you can do so.

Mr P MARRAN: Push her out.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Maseko, please take your seat. Hon member Marran, if you want to address me or you want to make a submission, can you please rise? Alternatively can you please stop with your dialogue across the

floor.

Mr P MARRAN: I do not have a dialogue.

The SPEAKER: Well, you keep going on and making statements [Interjections.] with the hon member Maseko.

Hon Maseko, you may please – you may take your seat. You may take your – the podium.

Ms M M MASEKO: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. †Hulle weet nie wat ons weet. [Tussenwerpsels.] [They do not know what we know.] [Interjections.] That is a fact. [Interjections.]

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

Ms M M MASEKO: Through you, hon Speaker, there are levels in life. [Interjections.]

The DA in the Western Cape has since called on the South African Police Service to launch a fully fledged and urgent investigation into the allegations of Opposition parties being connected and involved in land invasions and extortion throughout the province.



Hon Speaker, progress is not only threatened by criminal elements from some political parties, but also by the looming challenge of climate change. Recent severe weather events have inflicted significant damage on numerous infrastructure projects across the province. The Western Cape Government has repaired and reopened an impressive 97 roads since the September floods that devastated large parts of the Western Cape. The Western Cape Government has to date done a tremendous job in ensuring that our beautiful roads get repaired as quickly as possible and that people in the province can commute freely and unhindered despite the National Government paying over hardly any disaster funding as a result of disastrous budget cuts.

The destructive impact of wildfires also on infrastructure throughout our province cannot be overstated. These voracious blazes have the potential to engulf entire communities, leaving devastation in their wake and displacing thousands of residents. The aftermath of such tragedies underscores the urgent need for comprehensive measures to mitigate the risk posed by wildfires and to bolster our resilience against their destructive force.

To combat this and to improve overall fire safety in our informal settlements, the Western Cape Government has taken proactive steps by installing 13 000 fire alarm systems throughout the informal settlements in the province. These fire alarms play a crucial role in providing early warnings and ensuring the safety of communities in the Western Cape. To date R2,6 million has been spent on these fire alarm systems.

In conclusion, hon Speaker, this DA-led Government's unwavering commitment to excellence has driven us to achieve remarkable milestones in the development of world class schools, hospitals, roads and houses, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

Despite facing challenges and constraints, we remain resolute in our dedication to delivering exceptional services to our communities and this budget signifies our commitment to continue building upon achievements, ensuring that every resident has access to the finest facilities and services.

Despite the budget cuts imposed by the National Treasury we refuse to let these obstacles hinder our progress. Instead we will leverage every available resource, innovate tirelessly, collaborate effectively to overcome these challenges and realise our vision of a prosperous, inclusive and resilient province for all. Together with the support and cooperation of our residents, we will forge ahead, confident in our ability to conquer any obstacle and create a brighter future for generations to come.

Hon Speaker, let me emphasise that the DA and the Standing Committee on Infrastructure that supported the Budget Vote 10 of the Western Cape Adjustment Appropriation Bill, support the Bill and I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Maseko. I now recognise the hon Minister, Minister Simmers.

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you very much, hon Speaker, and thank you to all the members for their contributions.

I will only react to some, not all, and I will start with the hon member Cassiem, hon Speaker, through you. The hon member speaks of my Department returning funds. † Ek dink sy moet 'n bietjie leer om haar boeke reg te lees. [I think she should learn to read her books correctly.] Hon member, through you, hon Speaker, just for the current financial year, I will give you the expenditure as at 25 March per programme.

- In terms of Administration we have spent close to 100% of our budget.
- In terms of Public Works Infrastructure we have spent over 100% of our budget.
- In terms of Transport Infrastructure we are set and on track to nearly spend over 100% as well.
- In terms of branch Human Settlements we are well on track to spend just under 100% of our entire budget for the financial year.
- Then in terms of community-based programmes we have just crossed over 100%.

†So as jy wil praat, praat met feite of moet net nie die vraag vra nie, is die Afrikaanse gesegde, [so if you want to talk, talk with the facts or just don't ask the question, the Afrikaans saying goes,] but I do understand this member does not attend the Standing Committee. So whoever is informing her is actually misinforming her, †en dit is 'n groot skande, want sy het baie potensiaal natuurlik [and that is a great shame because she has of course a lot of potential.]

Hon Speaker, then the hon member focused on Dunoon. Again facts outweigh fiction and gossip. As a provincial department we spend R150 million to secure the site, to service the site, to get ready for construction. Midway through the preparation phase – remember, this is between Province and the City of Cape Town, there are different grants which you are supposed to do the identification of Dunoon, the budget has been cut. Not once, not twice, but thrice. Which means you can only do proper structure planning if you know what your budget will be, and once we are ready with the budget, the units will be built. Those are the facts. The community is *au fait* with all of these facts. So nobody can tell us that we are not informing them of what is happening.

Then I am amused, hon Speaker, by the member alleging she sent two emails. Now unless there is a different email address to the one I have, and I have just checked, the only email I have ever received from anybody in the EFF, is actually her national member who sits at the NCOP, regarding housing in Mossel Bay and I responded within 24 hours to his email. So perhaps they must be on the same WhatsApp group so she can actually get the correct email

address, but as of today I have not received any emails from the hon member Cassiem. †Miskien kan sy nie my naam reg spel nie. [Perhaps she cannot spell my name correctly.] Most people just spell my name wrong unfortunately. I am U-I-S, not I-U-S by the way.

Hon Speaker, and now we come to the myth that I have been hearing the ANC and it started with the Leader of the Opposition, who is not here. There is this myth that the ANC out-delivered the DA Government when they were in power. [Interjections.] I just want to give them the facts. From 1994 to 2009 indeed they did deliver more houses, but, there is a caveat to the "but" and I have gone through not one or two, but three PMG reports to substantiate what I am about to say.

There was a period under Minister Tokyo Sexwale when there was a Rectification Grant for poor workmanship of top structures for all provinces. The Western Cape – and this is just using the baseline of one financial year in terms of the Rectification Grant. The ANC-led Government left this DA Government, when it took over in 2009, with an average of 1 734 units that needed to be repaired per year, which meant for the 15 years the ANC governed, just the rectification of houses, and to give an indication, in the 2012/13 PNG report, again your National Minister said it, not me, the cost of rectification per unit was R38 673 at that stage. So I will use that as a benchmark figure.

For the 15 years the ANC delivered houses, the rectification for that period it is estimated that we had to spend to rectify what they are bragging about – †ek

sal nie oor gemors *brag* as ek eintlik hulle is nie – [I will not brag about rubbish if I were them] - that we actually have to spend between R1,1 billion and just under R1,4 billion to rectify houses built under the ANC Government, and to give you the scale of the rectification, that is an entire year's budget wasted on rectifying what the ANC built in 15 years. Know your ANC, †ken jou feite en kom by [know your facts and catch up.]

Then, hon Speaker, my colleague, who is like a shooting star. I keep on saying ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon member Lili, is that a point of order?

Mr A LILI: Is it parliamentary for a member to shout in this House?

The SPEAKER: There is no such Rule ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Welcome back.

The SPEAKER: ...how you address the House. [Interjections.] If you do it respectfully and the decorum is not being affected. The way the Minister is addressing the House is not affecting the decorum of the House.

Mr A LILIA: He must try to be honourable, please. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Lili, you have raised your point of order, I have addressed it, I am not getting into a dialogue with you. Hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Speaker, I do appreciate hon member Lili is like a shooting star. When I see him I appreciate him. [Interjections.] That is why I am shouting so he can actually listen, †dat dit kan insink. Die Afrikaanse gesegde sê dit moet insink dat jy kan verstaan. Deur u, agb Speaker. [that it can sink in. The Afrikaans saying goes that it must sink in so that you can understand it.]

Hon Speaker, then again the second part of the myth is that the delivery in only the Western Cape is seemingly declining, hon Speaker, and to bring it more to the current term. From 2019 to date, this is the latest Human Settlements report, we started our term delivering, across all nine provinces, hon member Lili, through you, hon Speaker, just over 120 000 units. Every year it has dipped. First to 85 000, then 69 000, then 52 000 nationally. So it is disingenuous of the ANC to just focus on the Western Cape when the entire country's delivery is actually dropping. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, like I said I will not respond to everything. In terms of the waiting list. Again I understand the member has been on a bit of an ANC set-aside holiday, whatever they want to call it, for more than a year. [Interjections.] If he read the 2022 Census report he would be well-aware it is estimated that 150 000 people ...[Interjections.]

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

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Because everything works.  
[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Can I please ask that the Table staff please address the online system. [Interjections.] Can all the microphones on the hybrid system please be muted? Can I please ask the members on my right-hand side to please allow the Minister to make his contribution. You are affecting the decorum of the House.

Yes. [Interjections.] Hon Minister, you may continue. Who – can I please ask if the microphones on the ...[Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Of an ANC member.

The SPEAKER: ...hybrid system can be – if there is a member that is interjecting on the hybrid system, can I please remind you of Rule 40 of our Standing Rules. No interjections are allowed if you choose to participate in the Sitting virtually.

Hon Minister, you may continue.

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you, hon Speaker. Again,



150 000 people are migrating to our province because everything works where the DA governs.

I understand my colleague was on a holiday and I would really request that perhaps you should provide him with the Census data and you can actually see what I am talking about to understand the gravitas, the implication of people migrating to our province.

So it is no wonder that as much as we try to address the backlog it keeps on increasing, but this is not a phenomenon unique to the Western Cape. Gauteng has the same problem, your Eastern Cape, the same problem. So it is disingenuous of the ANC to keep on saying that we are not addressing the backlog.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: You are not releasing that, that is why.

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Speaker, in conclusion, †ek is bly die uitgaande Opposisieleier is darem *finally* weer in die Huis om sy gesigte wys [I'm pleased the outgoing Opposition leader is finally back in the House to show his face.] Hon Speaker, [Interjections.] I do want to thank the Standing Committee Chairperson who has been at the helm for 10 years and listening to a speech reflection on her decade in this House. It speaks to what this DA has been able to deliver under very difficult circumstances with budgetary cuts,

budget constraints, uncertainty in policy and I do want to applaud her as the chairperson and those members of the Standing Committee for restoring oversight and by keeping us properly accountable. Thank you, hon member Maseko.

Then also the members of the Opposition who sometimes attend these meetings. Thank you for your inputs. It does help when you are there. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, through you, and this is to the broader members, but also those who are tuned in from across our province. It is exactly 63 days to an election. It is the most important election since 1994 by all accounts. This is an election where if ever we doubt that a few or a small group can make a difference, look to the Western Cape, what happened in 2009 when a small group of voters in the Western Cape changed who must govern their province, and 15 years later the value for the investment they can look, see and feel by all measurements.

So if you are wondering what to do on 29 May, it is very easy. At a national level, at over 100 years old, it is a good time for the ANC to go and relax now and sit on the Opposition benches at a national level.

In the Western Cape †hulle is met een voet in die graf en een voet buitekant die graf [they have one foot in the grave and one foot outside the grave.] It is now time in the Western Cape we finally send the ANC to meet their maker in the Western Cape on 29 May because indeed as much as we are one province we are a beacon of hope, we will remain the beacon of hope and the power of

the voter has made this change possible in 15 years and on 29 May, we will all see the real change after 29 May by voting DA. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much [Interjections.] – order, hon members! Thank you very much, hon Minister. That concludes the debate on this Vote. Hon member Marran, is that a point of order?

Mr P MARRAN: Yes.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr P MARRAN: Hon Speaker, the MEC must be honest.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of ...[Interjections.]

Mr P MARRAN: On the national list there is not a single Coloured person under 20 ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: That is not a point ...[Interjections.]

Mr P MARRAN: Not a single Coloured ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of ...[Interjections.]

Mr P MARRAN: Here out of the top 20 ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Hon [Interjections.] – hon members! Hon member Marran, that is completely unparliamentary what you just did. You asked for an opportunity to raise a point of order, I provided that point of order, it was not a point of order and you continued making a statement. [Interjections.] That is not the way that we as hon members at the end of a term should be behaving.

†n AGB LID: Dis n skande.

[An HON MEMBER: It's a disgrace.]

Mr P MARRAN: It is the truth.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, we are only ...[Interjections.]

Mr P MARRAN: It is the truth.

The SPEAKER: ...going to the Fourth Order of the day. [Interjections.] Can I – hon member Marran.

Mr P MARRAN: He is speaking to me... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Marran, I am on the floor.

Mr P MARRAN: Yes, but speak [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Marran, [Interjections.] hon member Marran.  
[Interjections.] Hon members, this is ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: So what? [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, I am on the floor. [Interjections.] Order, hon members!

We have come to the end of the debate, I cannot understand why we are still engaging on this Vote.

Hon Members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. I will now suspend the House for two minutes to allow hon Minister Simmers's guests to leave the Chamber. The House is suspended.

[Business of House suspended for clearing of bays.]

[Business of the House resumes.]

The SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Thank you very much, hon members.  
The Secretary will read the Fourth Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 9: Environmental Affairs and Development Planning – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2024].

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Minister, Minister Bredell.

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Speaker, to the hon Premier in his absence, to the Members of Cabinet, to the Members of Parliament, to my staff online. Thank you for the opportunity to present the budget for Cape Nature and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning for 24/25 financial year.

This budget is framed within the context of unprecedented pressure on our natural environment as the world grapples with climate change and all the risk associated with it. This time last year I mentioned the 2023 World Economic Forum Global Risk Report of 2023, stating the top four global risks for the next decade to be:

- The risk of failure to mitigate climate change.
- The risk of failure to adapt to climate change.
- The risk posed by natural disasters and extreme weather events.
- The risk associated with biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse.

Hon Speaker, these risks came home for us in the past 12 months. R3,5 billion

worth of infrastructure was destroyed in just two flooding events in June and September 2023. During the same time we suffered extensive damage along our coastline due to storm surges. Currently we are faced with an extreme busy fire season which has stretched our firefighting resources to the limit several times already.

Climate change is a reality for South Africa and the Western Cape. Predictions are for a hotter and drier province with more extreme and intense droughts and floods when they occur.

Hon Speaker, in my capacity as Minister for two departments I see different perspectives playing off at the same time. The one is long-term and the other one is reactive. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning works with the long-term issues that are not always immediately visible to us. The climate and environmental dynamics work on a time scale that is difficult for us to grasp. The planning function also works with the future and not the here and the now, but if this Department does not function, my other Department, the Department of Local Government, which also includes our disaster risk management, works very hard.

It means that planning, especially long-term planning, and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations are more critical than ever. If we do not plan and protect the environment in which we live and work, we are increasingly going to be rushing from one disaster to the next.

Hon Speaker, Vote 9, which includes Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and our State-owned entity, CapeNature, received R627 million for the 24/25 financial year, the Department received R319 million for 24/25 and CapeNature receives R308 million for 24/25 financial years. Environment policy planning and coordination, R40,5 million.

Hon Speaker, my Department together with the Department of Agriculture hosted the first provincial climate change indaba earlier this month. It was attended by a wide range of guests from research institutions, Government departments and all sectors of the private sector. The Western Cape Government has an overarching climate change strategy. Our Western Cape Climate Response Strategy sets out a clear vision to a net zero emissions and climate resilience province by 2050 and as members of the Under2 Coalition, a global network of sub-regional governments, we pledge to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 as guided by the 2050 Emissions Pathway Plan that is under development.

These goals integrate into multiple strategies including:

- The Growth for Job strategy.
- The Department of Health and Wellness participation in the Global Green and Healthy Hospital Programme.
- The One Health global commitment, and



- The SmartAgri strategy.

The Department allocated R14,4 million to facilitate the Green Economic Ecosystem Support initiative (GEES). GEES aims to attract and to help grow green economic businesses, promote the adoption of green technology with a specific focus on green energy and water. GEES sets itself a target of supporting 100 businesses in this financial year.

Hon Speaker, I want to recognise and to congratulate HOD Gerber and his management team for the hard work they are doing to mainstream and to coordinate climate change initiatives in this Provincial Government. It is long-term work and the results might not be visible immediately, but our children will thank them one day.

Compliance and Enforcement, R35,3 million. Hon Speaker, ensuring that our residents adhere to environmental legislation and regulations is a full-time job and our Green Scorpions in this directorate compliance and enforcement in 2023, 300 compliance inspections were concluded, 200 administrative enforcement notices were issued for non-compliance with environmental management legislation, and 10 completed criminal investigations were handed to the NPA for prosecution.

Hon Speaker, it is unfortunately so that in municipalities that struggle environmental issues are often pushed into the back burner, but we cannot

allow this as the damage we cause to ecological infrastructure in the present will inevitably lead to much worse consequences in the future.

Future Environmental Quality Management, R88,5 million. Hon Speaker, for us to promote more resilient and spatial transformed Western Cape settlements we need the correct tools to help us in planning and evaluating the impact choices will have on our environment and our economy. Environmental impact assessments is one of such tools. We are investing an earmarked amount of R3,9 million to achieve even higher efficiencies to this process as it is recognised as a powerful multiplier of economic benefits if EIAs are finalised within specific timeframes.

Our air quality tracks and monitor the avian air quality throughout this province with 12 air quality stations. All out municipalities have air quality management plans to manage air emissions, including greenhouse gases. Over the medium-term we will attract per capita carbon dioxide emissions and compile, amongst others, a Western Cape Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory.

Hon Speaker, many of our municipalities are struggling with closures and rehabilitation of existing waste disposal facilities. It is often a difficult budget item to motivate when it competes against priorities such as water security, housing, road infrastructure, etcetera. If we do not pay serious attention to the waste management, we will end up polluting our water sources and make our towns unattractive to and for investment.

Knysna is a cautionary tale of what happens when you do not plan for waste. Our waste management team conducted 36 compliance inspections in 2023. It will continue with this important work in 2024. Biodiversity management, R15,1 million. Hon Speaker, our biodiversity does not care for departments or programmes. To manage and protect our biodiversity we need to be able to align the plans of all spheres of government and external partners. We are working towards this alignment through the following:

- The Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.
- The Provincial Coastal Management Plan.
- The Provincial Estuary Management Plan.
- Biodiversity reserves and support plans.

I mentioned that we suffered R3,5 billion in damages last year caused by only two severe storms. Much of this damage could have been prevented if only we paid more attention to the health of our ecological infrastructure. Healthy mountain rainfall catchments can retain more water and release it slower into our rivers, reducing the severity of flooding. The river courses that are free of alien plants and trees flow more freely and prevents river banks being breached and infrastructure such as roads and bridges being washed away. Healthy ecological infrastructure increases our water security. It is our best buffer against extreme weather events.

Hon Speaker, according to a study done by the Greater Cape Town Water Fund, two-thirds of catchments are invaded by aliens. We require R730 million over a long term to address the specific challenges with R373 million required for intensive investment within the first six years. If we clear priority catchments we can reclaim 55 billion litres of water a day.

Hon Speaker, if we take no action our current water losses will double by 2045. Compared to other water supply options removing invasive alien vegetation is the most cost-effective with the most additional benefits. If I look at these figures I cannot stress enough that a mind shift is needed when we discuss policy and budget priorities in government.

The Development and Planning, R66,5 million. Hon Speaker, we must balance our economic development with the protection of the environment. This sometimes mean that difficult trade-offs have to be made. To make good decisions we need accurate data and we need to have long-term plans in place. One initiative that demonstrates this principle is our housing market study which provides invaluable insights into housing market for specific towns. We will conclude seven of these studies in 2024 and we will update four studies that we have concluded in 2023. These studies help municipalities with planning and is also of great value to property developers who can make longer term plans.

Housing market study also supports the development of inclusionary housing

policy which promotes affordable housing opportunities close to economic hubs. Housing in these areas often is too expensive for the very same people who would benefit most from living there.

Hon Speaker, another initiative that focused on special development is our Regional Socio-Economic Project (RSEP). This programme implements neighbourhood level projects that demonstrate how settlements can be improved and better integrated. RSEP is allocating an earmarked amount of R13,4 million in 2024 and will be rolled out to 14 municipalities. CapeNature, R308 million. Hon Speaker, CapeNature is our entity that protects the natural heritage in the Western Cape. CapeNature is an example of what a well-functioning State entity can look like and what value it unlocks for the population it serves.

With a conservation estate of close to 1 million hectares, which include several of our critical mountain rainfall catchments, CapeNature is also at the coalface of our experiences with extreme weather events.

During the flood in 2023 several of our tourism establishments suffered damages and this current wildfire season has also been very busy. This summer CapeNature was involved in 91 fires which burned over 61 967 hectares of land, 20 706 hectares of CapeNature managed land was burnt. This budget therefore sees an earmarked amount of R40 million for the infrastructure, maintenance and upgrades. An amount of R10,8 million is earmarked for disaster prevention measures, wildfire management and floods.

Hon Speaker, I conclude with the last topic I want to address. The people who give life to both the Departments of Environmental Affairs and Development planning as well as CapeNature. Administration [Inaudible] R72,7 million and CapeNature R226,5 million.

A lot has already been said by my colleagues about budget cuts we have to absorb on a provincial level due to the National Government's unfunded Wage Agreement, but that it is severely affected by this. The Department has now arrived at the point where reprioritisation and reductions are affecting legally mandated functions.

Hon Speaker, if it was not for integrity, passion and absolute commitment of our staff from the lowest level right through to the top, I would not have been able to present this picture of an excellent department and excellent CapeNature. Despite several financial constraints these people still find ways to do their best.

I want to thank HOD Gerber and the management team. I want to thank my Ministry and the team who have worked three terms with me. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. †Agb lid Marran, het jy die podium nodig? [Hon member Marran, do you need the podium? ]

†Mnr P MARRAN: Nee.

[Mr P MARRAN: No.]

The SPEAKER: I recognise you, hon member Marran.

Mr P MARRAN: Thanks very much, hon Speaker. The podium is for boyfriends.

Hon Speaker, When appearing ...

The SPEAKER: Excuse me? Hon member Marran, you were saying the podium is for?

Mr P MARRAN: Boyfriends.

The SPEAKER: I do not understand the context?

Mr P MARRAN: You were not here yesterday, but let us continue.

When appearing before the Committee to discuss the Budget Vote, the hon member Bredell highlighted the four top risks faced by the global community for the next decade as identified by the World Economic Forum. As we debate this Budget Vote, Vote 9: Environmental Affairs Development Planning, it is important to recall those risks which all entail the environment. These were extreme weather events, critical changes in earth systems, biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, as well as natural resources shortages.

The MEC went to remind us that we have had difficulty in this in the province, as well as hot summers, where fires have certainly affected not only budgets, but also the lives of our people.

Hon Speaker, the ANC cannot agree more with the World Economic Forum or with the MEC. We agree that no developing planning or economic growth can occur without a clear plan which takes these environmental risks into account. It is for this reason that the ANC in its manifesto highlights that, and I quote:

"Building our industries to achieve an inclusive economy, to transform our economy and Government needs to drive industrial growth, innovation and job creation. These involve targeted strategies to revitalise and diversify the manufacturing sector, foster a more inclusive and robust international and African market, skilled and re-skilled workers and meet the new global challenge of climate change, a just transition to a cleaner, greener future can lead to new jobs and secure the competitiveness of our experts."

At this stage it is safe to say that while the ANC agrees with the sentiments raised by the MEC, we cannot agree with the Budget Vote precisely because it does not go far enough to meet the new global challenge of climate change. For example, the ANC believes that we need to prioritise green technologies, energy efficiency, waste management, climate, smart agriculture and infrastructure and eco-friendly production processes to ensure long-term



sustainability. This includes developing and executing a plan to become a world player in green hydrogen battery and electric vehicle production.

It is also important that we might mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, technological changes and other trends in the context of a just transition and ensure that South Africa's transition to a low carbon economy supports communities and workers in affected areas, but this Provincial Government in its Provincial Budget Vote does not go far enough in prioritising the environment in those top four risks identified by the World Economic Forum. For example, the ANC has been consistent throughout this term of calling for the implementation of the establishment of an Environmental Commissioner as proposed by the Provincial Constitution.

Never mind that the DA claims to be a party which upholds the law, but then pick and choose which part of the law they want to implement. The lack of the appointment of an Environmental Commissioner serves as evidence that this DA-led Provincial Government is simply not serious about the environment, climate change and fighting pollution and destruction of the environment, but at the same time we must remind the MEC that the question of the Environmental Commission is not only about budget or the budget being used in other programmes, or even what these preferences are about. It is about the law.

It is not what individuals or even political parties think about the Environmental Commissioner, but it is about what does the law say. Not what

MEC Bredell says. What does the law say, not what does hon member Anton Bredell say, or what does the hon Marran say, or even what the hon Premier says. It is about what the law says and the law says we must establish an Environmental Commissioner that professes to be a party that respects the rule of law. Where is that respect of law now?

In fact as we pointed out before, what does the law say about the Environmental Commissioner? Because it is what the law says about the powers and who the Environmental Commissioner is accountable to, what the law says about the Environmental Commissioner, that is the big problem, because the Environmental Commission is an independent organisation. It does not report to the MEC nor to the Premier, and that is the problem with the MEC.

Another example of this Provincial Government of not taking these four risks seriously was that a mere two years ago the then MEC of Finance, Maynier, did not mention climate change in his budget speech. The ANC had to point this out and since then the last MEC for Finance at least saw it fit to mention this challenge in her budget speech. The same way that we have pushed for the Children's Commissioner, for this issue to be mentioned in the budget. The same way we are going to push for the Environmental Commissioner to be appointed, despite the individual feeling of an MEC.

In this Budget Vote the following is said about climate change, and I quote:

"Climate change triggers a cascade of interconnected risks that can

impact various aspects of human life and environment."

Yes, hon Speaker, the money does not match the commitment to taking climate change seriously.

The Department budget of Corporate Services is five times more than what it budgets for the Climate Change Programme. As with the non-appointment of the Environmental Commissioner the ANC has consistently lamented the fact that the Climate Change Programme has had its budget cut. No doubt the MEC will quickly point out budget cuts, but yet, yes, his Department gives a number of increases elsewhere.

With the little money they do have the MC increases the budget of his office. He increases the budget of senior management. He increases the budget of Corporate Services. He increases the budget of Financial Management and we can go on and on and on. Despite the budget cuts and, yes, we all admit budget cuts, nobody like budget cuts, but this Department with little money it increases the budgets of non-core programmes of this Department, but cuts budgets of core programmes. These cuts to essential programmes have seen municipalities act with impunity when it comes to the environment in the last five years.

In the last five years, pollution cannot be mitigated precisely because there are cuts to these kinds of essential programmes of this Budget Vote, while non-essential programmes, as found in Programme 1, get big increases.

Even worse, strategical posts which were funded in the Department have been left vacant because of bottlenecks in the appointment process by people management in the Department of the Premier. A problem for the last five years and nothing has been done about that problem.

In December, a mere three months ago, R3 million was reprioritised because posts were not full because of the freezing of these posts. Today in this Main Appropriation one wonders how many funds will be prioritised again in six months' time because of lack of urgency and seeing climate change for the emergency that it is.

In December we reminded this House that as we approach the summer season then, where thousands of millions of local and international tourists will be visiting our beaches and tidal pools, Fish Hoek, Strandfontein, Hout Bay, Camps Bay, tidal pools have been found to have low water quality. Low water quality. †Jy kan siek word daarso. [You can get sick there.] High bacteria was found at Central False Bay. †Okay, jy bly uit in Valsbaai se *beach*. [you're living out in False Bay's beach.] Lagoon beaches in Milnerton, Macassar and Gordons Bay, as well as Three Anchor Bay on the Atlantic Seaboard.

Our province has witnessed over the last five years how the City of Cape Town and other municipalities have consistently defied and destroyed our environment. We have seen a number of municipalities in the Western Cape not ensure that the environment of the province is protected. For example, we

had pollution in Milnerton Lagoon, the pollution of False Bay, thereby affect snoek. It is Easter Weekend. The Zandvliet waste water and there is no snoek. The Zandvliet Waste Treatment Works that saw the flow of sewerage into the Kuils River, but it is because the political leadership of this Department politicises implementation. They, together with the rest of the political leadership of this Provincial Government, only target and bully municipalities run by the ANC and other parties and not DA-run municipalities. DA municipalities can float environmental concerns, ANC-led ones cannot.

We use this all the time, one set of rules for the DA and one set of rules for the rest of us. This is precisely what happened in Knysna and the City of Cape Town. The Premier, the DA leader in the Western Cape, and the MEC rush to Knysna. He's not here, he ran away. Rushes to Knysna in fact because of water management, and again the MEC is going to raise about someone that was been found there. Many people have been found here in the City of Cape Town in manholes and so forth, and you have not acted.

In the City of Cape Town where there is also a waste management crisis and the Executive Director has been charged for that mess and it caused the City of Cape Town over R2 million now to defend that thing, in the City of Cape Town there is a waste management crisis. Not the Premier nor the DA leader in the Western Cape nor the MEC of this Department runs to the City to call for political intervention. You have called the Green Scorpions for Knysna, why not call in the Green Scorpions for the City of Cape Town? But we know why.

This is the double standards practised by the DA. Not only because the ANC governs in Knysna, but also because it is only poor African and Coloured areas that are affected by the waste management crisis in the City of Cape Town, and therefore the leadership of the DA simply do not care. They are afraid for JP. In Knysna everyone suffers together and suddenly political intervention is threatened and, yes, we must repeat, maybe it is because the Premier is from Knysna. That is why there is intervention. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Marran. I now recognise the hon member Van der Westhuizen.

†Mnr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: Agb Speaker, dit is die doel van die Departement van Omgewingsake en Ontwikkelingsbeplanning om 'n veerkragtige, volhoubare, hoë gehalte en inklusiewe omgewing te verseker wat menslike welstand moontlik sal maak, maar hierdie formidabele taak word met net sowat R627 586 000 in die voorgestelde begroting befonds.

Hoe gelukkig is ons nie in die Wes-Kaap om tans nog oor 'n relatief gesonde omgewing te kan beskik nie. Dit ten spyte van 'n vinnig groeiende bevolking wat al meer kies om na Kaapstad en ons groter dorpe te migreer, en wanneer mense dig op mekaar woon en sodra werkplekke soos fabriekke styf teen mekaar ingepak staan, skep dit besondere omgewingsuitdagings, en die natuur moet gewoonlik plek maak vir hierdie ontwikkelings.

Reënwater kan nie soos in die natuur wegsak en die ondergrondse bronne

aanvul nie. Rioolvuil moet weggevoer en behandel en geskei word voordat dit in riviere beland. Al meer sigbare besoedeling vind plaas, want die gebruiksduur van goedere word korter en verpakkingsmateriaal word belangriker, en mense reken toenemend daar sal andere wees wat die vullis kom optel.

Dis dan ook hierdie Departement se taak om te verseker dat omgewingswetgewing nagekom word en op te tree teen diegene wat die wette oortree, en as dit kom by dinge soos die bestuur van vaste-afval stortingsterreine is hierdie Departement, soos die Minister gesê het, dikwels in stryd met ander onafhanklike entiteite in 'n ander regeringsfeer, naamlik Plaaslike Regering, of te wel munisipaliteite, en dan is dit 'n kwessie van Staat v Staat, en dis 'n situasie wat nooit goed is om te hanteer nie, en tog, soos voorheen gemeld, is ons in die Wes-Kaap, danksy verskeie faktore, baie, baie bevoorreg.

Die lug wat ons inasem, die water in die meeste van ons riviere en die grootste deel van ons grond is nog redelik vry van besoedeling. Ek wens ek kon sê al die grond of al die riviere of al die strandmere is heeltemal vry van besoedeling, maar soos die agb lid Marran gesê het, ongelukkig is dit nie geval nie.

Ek gaan maar net enkele aspekte aanraak. Ons en baie ander wêrelddele sit met 'n groot uitdaging in terme van die bestuur van vaste afval. Dit behels onder andere 'n opvoedingstaak waaraan ons almal nog hard sal moet werk.

Terwyl die sigbare besoedeling die een is wat mense die meeste pla, is dit egter die onsigbare besoedeling wat dikwels die groter gevare inhou. Besoedeling van ons riviere deur die uitspoel van kunsmis wat dikwels die groter gevare inhou. Besoedeling van ons riviere deur die kunsmis, die swak bestuur van rioolplase, of rioolplase waarvan die kapasiteit oorskry word. Die besoedeling van ons lug deur ons vrye gebruik van motors met binnebrand enjins, dikwels om afstande af te lê waar ons eerder kon en moes gestap het. Dit is dus van groot belang dat ons vooruitbeplan en die regte beleide in plek stel.

Die program verantwoordelik vir omgewingsbeleid, omgewingsbeplanning en koördinasie se begroting moes dan ook in hierdie jaar merkbaar verhoog word, van R26,4 miljoen tot R40,5 miljoen, 'n verhoging van ongeveer 53%.

Hierdie Departement probeer mense se kultuur en denke rondom die omgewing verander, maar hulle taak word moeiliker gemaak deur 'n ander kultuurverandering, een waarin al meer mense weinige respek toon vir die wet en vir wetstoepassers.

Die Afdeling vir Nakoming en Wetstoepassing van die Departement se begroting styg daarom met 10,8% tot R35,35 miljoen. Die geld, vir enige styging in 'n begroting groter as die totale verhoging, moet ongelukkig weer elders verhaal word.

[Mr A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: Hon Speaker, it is the purpose of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning to ensure a resilient, sustainable, high quality and inclusive environment that will enable



human wellbeing, but this formidable task is only funded by about R627 586 000 in the proposed budget.

How fortunate are we not in the Western Cape to now still have a relatively healthy environment. That, in spite of a fast growing population that chooses more and more to migrate to Cape Town and our larger towns, and when people are living close together and as soon as workplaces like factories are packed close together, it creates special environmental challenges, and nature usually has to make way for these developments.

Rain water cannot as in nature sink underground and supplement the underground resources. Sewerage must be removed and treated and separated before it ends up in rivers. More and more visible pollution takes place, because the use duration of goods are becoming shorter and packaging material becomes more important, and people are increasingly assuming there will be others to come and pick up the rubbish.

It is then also this Department's task to ensure that environmental legislation is adhered to and act against those breaking the laws, and when it comes to things like the management of solid waste dumping site, this Department, as the Minister said, often in conflict with other independent entities in another sphere of government, namely Local Government, or municipalities, and then it is a matter of State vs State, and it is a situation that is never good to handle, and yet, as mentioned before, we in the Western Cape, thanks to various factors, very very privileged.

The air that we breathe, the water in most of our rivers and the largest part of our land are still reasonably free from pollution. I wish I could say all the land or all the rivers or all the lagoons are completely free of pollution, but as the hon member Marran said, unfortunately it is not the case.

I'm going to only touch upon a few aspects. We and many other parts of the world have a great challenge in terms of the management of solid waste. It involves amongst others an educational task in which we all will have to work hard. While the visible pollution is the one that bothers people the most, it is the invisible pollution that often holds the most danger. Pollution through washing out of fertilizer that often holds the greater dangers. Y fertilizer, the poor management of waste sites, or waste sites where the capacity is exceeded. The pollution of our air through our free use of motor cars with combustion engines, often to drive distances where we could and should rather have walked. It is therefore of great importance that we plan ahead and put the right policies in place.

The programme responsible for environmental policy, environmental planning and coordination's budget have in this year been markedly increased, from R26,4 million to R40,5 million, an increase of about 53%.

This Department tries to change people's culture and thoughts around the environment, but their task is complicated by another change of culture, one in which people more and more people show little respect for the law and law

enforcement officers.

The Division for the Adherence and Law Enforcement's budget therefore increases by 10,8% to R35,35 million. The money, for any budget larger than the total budget must unfortunately be recovered elsewhere.

The programme Environmental Quality Management's Budget. If it had to stay the same for all practical purposes. Air quality is extremely important to avoid all kinds of illnesses. This we see most markedly in provinces such as Mpumalanga where many of our power stations are exceeding the air quality norms. Unfortunately this division has come under severe monetary stress to the extent that some of our air quality monitoring stations had been closed down and others moved to more strategic positions.

One can only but hope that future budgets will allow us to reverse this trend, particularly in anticipation that the economy will in the future be better managed and grow and that more and more factories therefore will elect the Western Cape as its preferred destination.

†Wêreldwyd word daar met nuwe oë na die omgewing en die belangrikheid van die omgewing gekyk. In Suid-Afrika het ons oor die afgelope twee dekades 'n navolging van internasionale praktyke, talle wette en regulasies ingestel om die omgewing te bewaar en dit is die taak van hierdie Departement om toe te sien dat daar binne hierdie wette en regulasies opgetree word.

Terselfdertyd het ons gesien dat sommiges geen geleentheid sal verbygaan om die grense van die wet te toets nie. Dit verg al meer en al meer goed toegeruste en opgeleide amptenare om suksesvolle vervolgings teen oortreders te lei. Die hele veld van omgewingsimpakstudies en die verleen van verlof en die vrystelling vir ontwikkeling is na 20 jaar nog steeds 'n relatief nuwe en ontwikkelende veld wat addisionele kapasiteit van die Departement verg, en tog hou hierdie program se begroting nie tred met die sentraal bedingde loonverhogings nie. Dit hou ook nie tred met die groei en inwonergetalle nie, of met die groeiende getal reservate en die vergroting van die areas waarvoor CapeNature verantwoordelikheid moet aanvaar nie.

Soos wat u gehoor het word die Begroting waaroor ons moet stem feitlik gelykop verdeel tussen CapeNature en die Departement self. CapeNature het die feitlik onbegonne taak om die uitgebreide natuurgebiede, meestal die in openbare besit, maar ook 'n paar privaat natuurgebiede, in die Wes-Kaap te bestuur.

Een aspek is die bestuur van indringerplante en ander indringer-fauna, maar CapeNature se begroting hiervoor is totaal ontoereikend en CapeNature word daarom dikwels beskuldig, en soms tereg ook, dat hulle nie genoeg op hierdie terrein doen nie. Dit is egter 'n formidabele taak om indringerplante, om maar een aspek te noem, te bestry. Dikwels op onbegaanbare terrein, en dit is nie 'n eenmalige oefening nie, want die saadbank kan vir baie jare daar lê, en dit word dikwels deur vuur gestimuleer om te ontkiem, en ongelukkig is die goedkoopste beheermetode, naamlik vuur, een wat talle ander negatiewe

gevolge meebring. Die bestryding van indringers is dus 'n lang, moeilike en hoogs arbeidintensiewe proses.

Mag ek u daaraan herinner dat ons probleme met indringerplante hoofsaaklik sy oorsprong vind in die Nasionale Regering wat spesies soos dennebome na Suid-Afrika gebring en in bosbougebiede gevestig het, en dit is van daardie ou bosbougebiede wat die sade versprei het na ons inheemse woude, en dit is daarom, na my mening, die Sentrale Regering se plig om aansienlik meer geld vir provinsies beskikbaar te stel vir hierdie indringerbeheer.

Soos u reeds gehoor het, die totaal van hierdie Departement se voorgestelde begroting vir 2024/2025 is R627 miljoen. 'n Skamele 6,8% verhoging in jaar-op-jaar inkomste, en dit terwyl ons almal weet dat die salarisverhogings in die Staatsdiens hierdie persentasieverhoging oorskry. Ons moet dus letterlik meer met minder doen.

[Worldwide people are looking with new eyes at the environment and the importance of the environment. In South Africa we have over the past two decades, in following international practices, established many laws and regulations to protect the environment and it is the task of this Department to see that people act within these laws and regulations.

At the same time we have seen that some people will not pass up any opportunity to test the boundaries of the law. It requires more and more well equipped and trained officials to lead successful prosecutions against transgressors. The whole field of environmental impact studies and the

granting of permission and the release for development are after 20 years still a relatively new and developing field which requires additional capacity from the Department, and yet this programme's budget does not keep up with the centrally negotiated wage increases. It also does not keep up with the growth and residential numbers, or with the growing number of reserves and the increase of the areas for which CapeNature has to accept responsibility.

As you have heard, the Budget we have to vote for is almost divided equally between CapeNature and the Department itself. CapeNature has the almost impossible task to manage the expanded nature areas, mostly those in private ownership, but also a few private nature areas, in the Western Cape.

One aspect is the management of invasive plants and other invasive fauna, but Cape Nature's budget for this is totally insufficient and CapeNature is sometimes accused, and sometimes rightly so, that they are not doing enough in this terrain. It is however a formidable task to fight invasive plants, to name but one aspect. Often on impassable terrain, and it's not a once-off exercise, because the seed bank can lie there for many years, and is often stimulated by fire to sprout, and unfortunately the cheapest method, namely fire, has several other negative consequences. Fighting invasive vegetation is therefore a long, difficult and highly labour intensive process.

May I remind you that our problems with invasive plants mainly had its origin in the National Government who brought species like pine trees to South Africa and established it in forestry areas, and it is from those old forestry areas that

the seeds distributed to our indigenous forests, and it is therefore, in my opinion, the duty of the Central Government to make more money available for this invasive plant control.

As you have heard already, the total of this Department's proposed budget for 2024/2025 is R627 million. A mere 6,8% increase in year-on-year revenue, and that when everyone knows that the salary increases in the public service exceeds this percentage increase. We therefore have to do more with less.]

Hon Speaker, I am now going to switch to climate change. Climate change affects us all and the Department has a crucial coordinating role to play not only in the transition to a low carbon economy, but also in the setting of policies and the management of climate-related initiatives. While we know that the earth is warming at an unusually high rate, we are still unable to accurately predict all the changes that will be brought about by climate change. What we do know is that many gases are affecting the atmosphere, limiting the earth's ability to let the heat from the sun escape through the atmosphere. We therefore need to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane as well as numerous man-made gases such as fluorine-containing gases that were used in old cooling systems.

I have early on referred to the migration of people to Cape Town and our bigger towns. This phenomena is not unique to South Africa and it is not necessarily a bad thing. What is, however, true is that we need to plan for this migration and to ensure that the basic municipal services are in place. The programme

for development planning is therefore doing very important work in looking towards the future. While the implementation of all sorts of infrastructure remains the responsibility of local authorities, this Parliament and this Department must ensure that a bird's eye view is taken and that planning happens across municipal boundaries.

This programme will be receiving a 4,9% increase which again is a net cut in the budget in real terms. The Standing Committee was able to visit a number of sites where the RSEP, or the Regional Socio-Economic Programme assisted with funding for the upgrade of various areas within municipalities. The great thing about this programme is the way in which the funding from this Department is leveraged to eventually achieve an end product that far exceeds the sometimes modest contribution by this Department and we can really take pride in the improvement in the lives of individuals and communities that these projects bring about.

†Die uitgebreide Openbare Werke Program, meer algemeen bekend as EPWP, is deur die Nasionale Regering ingestel as 'n armoedeverligtingsprogram. Ongelukkig is die bedrag wat ons – en dus hierdie Departement – hiervoor ontvang met byna 18% gesny. Soveel vir 'n ANC-regering wat sê dat hy arm mense prioritiseer. Steeds sal die Wes-Kaapse Natuurbewaringsraad, oftewel CapeNature, steeds vir 450 mense onder hierdie program werk aanbied.

Hierdie meestal jongmense wat uit die platteland kom waar werks- en opleidingsgeleenthede skaars is, is maar te dankbaar vir die geleentheid om



iets te verdien, al is die vergoeding soos deur die Nasionale Regering vasgestel, ironies genoeg, ver onder die einste regering se minimum loon vlak.

Soos wat u weet is ek baie lief om provinsiale natuurreserve te besoek en ek is elke keer hoogs beïndruk met die vriendelike en bekwame diens wat hierdie mense lewer. Wat 'n jammerte dat soveel van Suid-Afrika se geld deur korrupsie gesteel en landuit geneem is. Geld wat vir hierdie jongmense 'n permanente pos kon aanbied en wat 'n goeie diens op 'n nog hoër vlak sou kon bring. Ek is dankbaar om aan u te kan oordra dat CapeNature, ten spyte van die begrotingsbeperkings en -besnoeiings, sal voortgaan om omgewingsbewustheid geleenthede aan te bied met die klem daarop om die belangrikheid van ons skaars en bedreigde spesies aan mense oor te dra.

Ons vertrou ook dat sowat 5 000 hektaar by die huidige grond wat alreeds vir bewaring geormerk is en deur CapeNature bestuur word, in hierdie begrotingsjaar by die huidige portefeulje bygevoeg sal word.

Agb Speaker, aangesien hierdie waarskynlik my laaste geleentheid is om die werk van die Departement van Omgewingsake en Ontwikkelingsbeplanning in hierdie Parlement in oënskou te kan neem, glo ek dat u my 'n aantal bedankings sal gun.

Baie dankie aan die talle toegewyde amptenare in die Departement vir hulle toegewyde en uitstekende diens. Baie dankie aan Minister Bredell wat deur al die storms heen die koers vir hierdie een, ook vir sy tweede departement,

doelgerig aandui. Dankie vir die uitstekende ouditresultate wat oor soveel jare behaal is. U maak ons trots en ons weet dat ons elke jaar die begroting met groot vrymoedigheid aan u kan toevertrou, want ons weet die geld sal korrek gespandeer word en ons weet daar sal van elke sent rekenskap gegee kan word.

Op 'n meer persoonlike noot. My eerste openbare amp was om in 1999 'n lid van die Oorgangsraad vir Franschhoek te kon word en later twee keer as Speaker vir Stellenbosch Munisipaliteit, waarby Franschhoek in 2000 ingelyf is, verkies te word. In 2019 en 2014 is ek tot die Nasionale Parlement verkies. U sal dus bewus wees daarvan dat my familie al vir 25 jaar verlief moet neem dat ek nie 'n lewe met normale werksure kan handhaaf nie. Daarom wil ek baie dankie sê aan my familie vir hulle ondersteuning.

Die beeld van my bejaarde ouers, beide het ons in die afgelope twee jaar ontval, en wat vir my, hulle seun, heelhartig ondersteun het, ook deur meermale in slegte weer 'n stempunt op stembag te beman, is iets wat my altyd sal bybly.

Vir die lede van die Staande Komitee wil ek baie dankie sê vir u ondersteuning. Die statistiek sal wys dat hierdie Komitee een van die komitees is wat die meeste kere vergader het en so die hardste gewerk het. Die talle ure saam in vergaderings en saam in bussies op die lang pad, het gelei tot vriendskapsbande oor partygrense heen. Dankie aan die agb lid Marran wat die afgelope vyf jaar deurgaans saam met my hierdie pad gestap het en so gehelp het om groter kontinuïteit aan die Komitee te verseker, met groot dank.

Ons is bly om te kan sê dat al die lede van die Staande Komitee op Omgewingsake en Ontwikkelingsbeplanning, met een uitsondering, die Begroting soos voorgelê heelhartig steun. Ons vra dus hierdie Huis se steun vir hierdie Begroting. Ek dank u.

[The Expanded Public Works Programme, more generally known as EPWP, was established by the National Government as a poverty relief programme. Unfortunately the amount that we – and thus this Department – receive for this was cut by almost 18%. So much for an ANC Government that says that it prioritises poor people. But still the Western Cape Nature Conservation Council, or Cape Nature, offer work to 450 people under this programme.

These mostly young people coming from the platteland where work and training opportunities are scarce, are only too grateful for the opportunity to earn something, even though the remuneration as determined by the National Government is ironically far below the very government's minimum wage level.

As you know I love visiting provincial nature reserves and I'm every time highly impressed with the friendly and efficient service delivered by these people. What a pity that so much of South Africa's money has been stolen and taken out of the country. Money that could have offered a permanent post to these people and taken a good service to an even higher level. I'm pleased to inform you that CapeNature, in spite of the budget constraints and cuts, will continue to offer environmental awareness opportunities with the emphasis on conveying the importance of our scarce and endangered species to people.

We also trust that about 5 000 hectares will be added to the present land that has already been earmarked for conservation and is managed by CapeNature, in this budget year, to the present portfolio.

Hon Speaker, as this is probably my last opportunity to look at the work of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in this Parliament, I believe you will allow me a number of acknowledgements.

Thanks to all the many dedicated officials in the Department for their dedicated and excellent service. Thanks to Minister Bredell who purposefully shows the way for this one through all the storms and also for his second department. Thanks for the excellent audit results that have been achieved over so many years. You make us proud and we know that we can entrust you with the budget very year with great confidence, because we know that the money will be spent correctly and that every cent will be accounted for.

On a more personal note. My first public office was to become a member of the Transitional Council for Franschhoek in 1999 and later serve twice as Speaker for Stellenbosch Municipality, to which Franschhoek was incorporated in 2000. In 2019 and 2014 I was elected to the National Parliament. You will thus be aware that my family for 25 years had to accept that I cannot maintain a life with normal working hours. Therefore I want to thank them for their support.

Something that will always remain in my mind is the image of my aged parents, both have passed away over the past two years, and who wholeheartedly supported me, their son, also by serving at a voting site on voting day, often in bad weather.

To the members of the Standing Committee I want to say thank you for your support. Statistics will show that this Committee is one of the committees that have met the most times and therefore worked the hardest. The many hours together in meetings and in small buses on the road, led to ties of friendship across party boundaries. Thank you to the hon member Marran who over the past five years continuously walked this road with me and so helped to ensure greater continuity to the Committee.

We are pleased to be able to say that all the members of the Standing Committee for Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, with one exception, support the Budget wholeheartedly as tabled. We therefore ask this House's support for this Budget. I thank you.

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie, agb lid Van der Westhuizen. Die agb Minister, Minister Bredell.

[The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Van der Westhuizen. The hon Minister, Minister Bredell.]

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, to the hon member Marran, †baie dankie vir jou insette. Ons weet waar ons verskil en dit is goed om te verskil, maar ek dink ek moet een ding darem net ook regstel en dit is ons as ons wetgewing begin aanhaal, [thank you for your inputs. We know where we differ and it is good to differ, but I think I must just set one thing straight and that is when we cite legislation.] the law states also that thou shalt not steal and maybe you must talk to the ANC about that as your party, because we sit in a financial crisis because of 30 years of ANC corruption. [Interjections.]

†Agb Speaker, om dan na Milnerton te gaan en te praat oor Milnerton. Net vir die agb lid Marran en sy kollegas ...[Tussenwerpsel.] [Hon Speaker, to then go to Milnerton and to speak about Milnerton. Just for the hon member and his colleagues ...][Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon member Marran, is that a point of order?

Mr P MARRAN: Not necessarily a point of order, but I just wanted to ask whether the hon MEC is saying that I have stolen?

The SPEAKER: Okay, okay ...[Interjections.]

Mr P MARRAN: I just wanted to know what he means.

The SPEAKER: ...that is a point of order, so please take your seat. I will pose the question to the Minister. Hon Minister, did you refer to any member of this House as, that stole or that is corrupt?

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: No, I refer to the ANC as a party.

The SPEAKER: Absolutely, that is parliamentary. You may continue, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Speaker, the Milnerton – and obviously there are issues within City of Cape Town because of population growth and, and. We do not live in an ideal world, but the City of Cape Town – and we have got 18 directives against the City and pre-directives against the City, so we monitor the City and they have got a plan and as long as they stick to the plan we will work with them, but Knysna has got no plan, therefore we had to act and now there is a task team, national, provincial, both my Departments and Knysna, and already you can see we have managed to clean the town and we will keep on monitoring, but if they do not want to come to the table, irrespective of their political affiliation, we will act. The Green Scorpions will act and that is how we operate and that is how we will work.

Hon Chair, I have also missed the opportunity to welcome Dr Ashley Naidoo from CapeNature, the new CEO, and I also want to wish him well and his

Department. They are online and I gave them permission, it is fine, to be online because the times shift.

†Aan die agb lid Van der Westhuizen, baie dankie vir jou voorsitterskap, jou leiding. Ek het hoë en baie agting en respek vir jou as 'n mens en die manier hoe jy die Departement as Voorsitter verantwoordbaar gehou het, ons altyd op ons tone gehou het en nooit weggeskram het om die belangrike vrae te vra nie, want aan die einde van die dag dien ons nie mekaar as kollegas nie, maar ons dien die publiek, die breë publiek van die Wes-Kaap en Suid-Afrika. So baie dankie daarvoor en ons gun jou dan ook die rus en met dit, sê ek vir almal wat deelgeneem het baie, baie dankie en ons lê ter tafel die Begroting. Dankie.

[To the hon member Van der Westhuizen, thank you for your chairmanship, your leadership. I hold you in high esteem and respect you highly as a person and the way how you as Chairman have held the Department accountable, always kept us on our toes and never shied away from asking the important questions, because at the end of the day we do not serve each other but we serve the public, the broad public of the Western Cape and South Africa. So thank you very much for that and we then also grant you the rest, and with that, I say thank you very much to all who had participated, and we table the Budget. Thank you.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. The Secretary will read the Fifth Order of the Day.



†Die SEKRETARIS: Debat op Begrotingspos 14: Plaaslike Regering – Wes-Kaapse Wetsontwerp [W 1-2024].

[The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 14: Local Government – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2024].]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Minister, Minister Bredell.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to present the 2024/25 Budget for the Department of Local Government today.

Hon Speaker, when Local Government are in the news in South Africa it is almost always bad news. Service delivery protests, water interruptions, sewage flowing in the street, waste piling up in town centres, potholes, electricity debt to Eskom, unstable coalitions, motions of no confidence, Auditor-General qualification reports and disclaimers.

Hon Speaker, the above are all examples of man-made disasters, but we also experience natural disasters in Local Government looking back over the past year in our province. R3,5 billion worth of infrastructure was destroyed in just two flooding events in June and September. We suffered extensive damages along our coastline due to storm surges in 2023. Garden Route District

calculated this to be more than R64 million.

Currently we are faced with an extremely busy fire season which has stretched our firefighting resources to the limit several times already. Our fire services have since December 2023 responded to 9 500 fires which burned 35 000 hectares.

Hon Speaker, when things go wrong we experience it there where we live and work, in our towns and in our cities. If local governments are not functioning, people suffer. This is the context in which the Department of Local Government works to support and enable our municipalities to deliver services to our residents.

Hon Speaker, the Western Cape Department of Local Government is doing its job very well. This is reflected in the performance of our municipalities. Our own research at the end of 2023 indicates that 25 out of our 30 municipalities are stable and perform well when measured against the functionality, administrative stability, service delivery performance and financial sustainability.

Our Government entities and independent research organisations make similar findings. 27 out of 30 municipalities clean audits from the Auditor-General were achieved during the last reporting cycle, a total of 15 Blue Drop Certifications in the 2023 Blue Drop Report of the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Good Governance Africa is the latest research organisation that finds that in all municipal categories, metro district, secondary cities, large cities or towns and small towns, municipalities from the Western Cape are the best. Swartland Municipality is recognised as the best municipality in South Africa.

Hon Speaker, I was not surprised to read the reaction of some of the Opposition parties on the latest findings of Good Governance Africa. According to these Opposition parties, clean audits and accolades from good service delivery do nothing for the poorest of the poor. These Opposition voices do have a point because it is true that poverty and inequality are in plain sight for all to see in the Western Cape and in South Africa.

We must be realistic with our expectations and what can be achieved by the local municipalities within the larger context of our country. We never give the ANC enough credit for destroying service delivery institutions in its 30 years of ruling our country. As far back as 2011 the National Development Plan identified poverty and inequality as core challenges South Africa must address if we are to prosper and develop as a country.

In 2010, 15 000 000 people received social grants. In 2011 unemployment stood at 21,4%. In 2015 our Gini coefficient, a measurement of inequality was at .65. According to Gini zero represents equal society and 1 the most unequal, making us the country with the highest inequality in income distribution in the world.

Now, in 2024, hon Speaker, the picture looks even worse. The Gini coefficient factor is at .67, maintaining our status as the most unequal society on the planet. Our country has an unemployment rate of higher than 30%. According to some sources this is also the highest unemployment rate in the world. The result of this is that South Africa's 8 million taxpayers are supporting 27 million people; 18 million on social grants and 9 million on the COVID Social Relief and Distress Grant, who rely on social grants to survive. That is roughly 45% of our population, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, so yes, our achievements do not say that everything is perfect, but the detractors of our achievement should also have an honest look in the mirror and reflect on their contribution in solving the challenges our country and our province are facing.

Hon Speaker, with above as context, the Department of Local Government sees a budget allocation of R440,4 million in 2024/25 earmarked allocation, for 24/25 reflects the Department's commitment to address the challenges facing us and providing support to local governments for them to provide services to our citizens. SIDAFF R6 million.

Hon Speaker, the Sustainable Infrastructure Development and Financial Facility (SIDAFF) Programme is a partnership that focuses on infrastructure development in secondary cities within the Western Cape to boost the economy of this province. As part of the support we help to ensure that the

municipalities meet the international criteria required to attract funding for large catalytic projects. The budget allocation provides for dedicated project management support to ensure the successful rollout of this programme.

A project of R4 billion has already been identified and are currently in different stages of development. These include bulk water and wastewater projects that are in progress for Overstrand, Drakenstein, Mossel Bay, Swartland and Saldanha Bay. A 30 megawatt solar plant, together with a 100 megawatt energy storage facility will be developed in phases in George. The Cape Winelands, a new regional landfill site at the cost of R95 million has been identified as SIDAFF project. The project team is currently approaching potential international funders for this project.

Disaster Management. R9,6 million. Hon Speaker, I have already mentioned the damages suffered in the past year due to natural disasters. We can add the recent electricity outage in the Karoo to this list. The towns of Laingsburg, Ladysmith, Prince Albert and several small municipalities in the Karoo were without electricity for almost two weeks in February this year. That was our first experience with what the blackout represents. In this instance fewer than 50 000 people were affected and through the coordination of Disaster Management Centre, all Western Cape departments stepped up to support those communities.

Hon Speaker, we need to be ready when 7 million people in this province must survive without electricity for weeks if we are to experience a countrywide

blackout. The R89 million we spend on backup generators for essential services in the previous financial year came to very good use during this crisis. The earmarked allocation for Disaster Management will go towards new technology such as Artificial Intelligence and anticipatory disaster risk management tools.

Energy R77,5 million. Hon Speaker, the Karoo outage just reconfirms the need for Western Cape Government to invest in energy security. As such R67 million is allocated to pilot renewable energy solutions in municipalities. R3 million goes towards the provision of specialist professional service providers to conduct investigations and assess the potential of renewable projects. We are allocating R3,6 million towards the Municipal Electricity Master Planning Programme and R5,7 million is allocated for additional critical skills to support the Energy Programme in the Department.

Water Resilience R31,6 million. Hon Speaker, living with unreliable electricity is bad, but when water dries up it is worse. What must the world think of us when they see that Johannesburg, the economic powerhouse of South Africa, cannot provide water to its residents? The situation is made worse by the fact that the crisis is not due to a lack of water, but due to bad management of the water that is available. This is not a natural disaster, this is a man-made disaster.

Hon Speaker, the Western Cape has a growing population and that has direct consequences for our water security. According to the latest Census data the

province saw a population growth of 27% over the past decade, now standing at 7,2 million people. This number is expected to grow to 8 million people by 2030 and according to the Provincial Economic Review and Outlook Report (PERO) we can expect a population of 10 million people by 2040.

Our 15 year Water Plan is currently being reviewed by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and we are training officials in all our municipalities to use the tools developed in this Water Plan. These tools enable them to plan for future water security using data on population growth, economic growth, water sources and water infrastructure. This budget allocates R31,6 million to strengthen existing initiatives and to explore new innovative responses to improve our future water resilience.

Hon Speaker, in addition to these priorities the Department will continue to support capacity building within municipalities for which we are allocating R5 million in this 2024/25 budget.

An amount of R6,5 million will go towards drought support and R2 million will be invested in strengthening the fire and rescue services.

R2,1 million is allocated for research policy development and support to traditional councils and facilitate the implementation of the Traditional Khoisan Leadership Act.

R5,9 million goes towards strengthening municipal support interventions

together with our Provincial Treasury in accordance with Section 139 of the Constitution.

R7 million will be invested in our disaster centre audiovisual infrastructure.

R11,5 million is budgeted for aerial firefighting. The current wildfire season has once again confirmed that the expensive method of firefighting is the correct approach. Although expensive we have had no human casualties so far and the value of property that was saved from destruction this season runs into billions of rand.

Hon Speaker, an amount of R230 million goes towards our personnel component. Allow me to thank HOD Paulse, his senior management team and all the staff of the Department of Local Government. I have been working with you for three political terms and we have experienced some very intense challenges during this time. We have had several natural disasters; the Knysna fire of 2017 which claimed 7 lives and 16 000 hectares of plantation and fynbos and urban areas, resulting in damages of billions of rand.

Who can forget the Day Zero drought in 2018/19?

We had to face COVID, which changed the world fundamentally.

The faced the first ever Category 9 storm, as classified by the South Africa



Weather Services, in September 2023.

The current wildfire season that has stretched our firefighting abilities to the limit.

South Africa is in an election year in 2024. Some analysts are calling this our post-94 watershed election. We know first-hand the challenges of coalition councils. We experienced the man-made disasters that unfolded in Knysna over December holidays. We still need to find the best strategy to spend less time in courts due to non-compliance by municipalities and more time focusing on actual service delivery on the ground in some of our coalitions.

Allow me to thank Marius du Randt, the head of my Ministry and the team he manages. Please accept my profound thanks and appreciation for all the years of hard work and dedication that goes into facing these challenges. The work is not easy, but this work is extremely important. I thank you.

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie, agb Minister.

[The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister.] I now recognise the hon member Dugmore. Hon member Dugmore, do you need the podium?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thanks, hon Speaker, I think it will be fine.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thanks for asking.

Hon Speaker, hon members, in his reply to the State of the Nation Address in February this year, our President Ramaphosa said the following, and I quote:

"Through capacity support to provinces and municipalities we are improving their ability to spend the grants allocated to infrastructure. We are committed to putting an end to the practise of infrastructure funds being returned to the fiscus unspent. This is a problem across the country, including here in the Western Cape."

The words of our President. This Budget Vote that we debate here today and the Provincial Government which presents it here today, have focused much on the budget cuts, despite the R29 million increase in this Budget Vote for this financial year.

The ANC, hon Speaker, cannot support this Vote and I think that will become apparent, because, however, as President Ramaphosa points out the challenge is not only funding, but certainly capacity as well and while the globe suffers from a cost of living crisis and as governments across the world contemplate budget cuts and operate under immense fiscal constraints, we, especially here in the Western Cape, actually have no excuse as far as capacity is concerned.

It is downright unjustifiable that year after year this Department complains

about bottlenecks in the Department of the Premier in terms of appointing people to critical posts. Year after year, despite the billions spent on E-Innovation in the Department of the Premier, critical departments such as this Department of Local Government have to suffer because critical posts are not actually being filled.

As a result, President Ramaphosa is correct, that critical funds are being returned to the National Fiscus because of a self-created lack of capacity here in the Western Cape. The ANC finds it important to ensure that despite the lack of capacity at a municipal level, that capacity must at least exist at a provincial level. For example, in our ANC Manifesto it says clearly that we will give National and Provincial Governments greater responsibilities to support municipalities who struggle to service communities.

This brings us back to the lack of basic service delivery in the majority of our municipalities. The City of Cape Town, for one, returns hundreds of millions of rands annually because of unspent funds, especially in Infrastructure and Human Settlements, but it appears that this MEC and this Provincial Government are either scared or see the City of Cape Town as untouchable, because you actually never hear any firm critique about such a blatant inability to spend infrastructure funds allocated.

If the City of Cape Town is not returning the millions to the National Government, then in fact what it is doing is fiscally dumping funds. The people of Vredendal North, the poor people of Vredendal North and not the town, had

to go for weeks without water because of apathy towards service delivery to the poor by that DA-led municipality. In this respect the ANC Manifesto is clear. We must give National and Provincial Governments more powers to intervene to provide clean water where municipalities are struggling to properly provide the service, build maintenance capacity and actually complete water infrastructure projects.

At the same time we must raise the serious issue of municipalities when getting residents to pay for services and through their indigent policies forcing poor residents to first pay their debt to the municipality before actually delivering those services.

At the same time we must again raise the issue that it cost the residents dependent on the City of Cape Town for electricity, more for their electricity than those in the same city purchasing directly from Eskom. The people of the Western Cape must know that the ANC's approach is totally different.

In our manifesto we make it clear that municipalities, and I quote:

"Maintain and expand subsidised basic services like water, houses for the poor, and indigent policies in these municipalities."

We cannot as the ANC support R54 million simply going in this Budget to Corporate Services. When cuts are made Programme 1 is the first place where cuts must be made because this is a non-essential or non-core programme.

The ANC finds it, hon Speaker, completely unacceptable that the Community Development Worker Budget is cut and yet Corporate Services get a budget increase. †So ons mense moet verstaan dat die Begroting wat werk skep eintlik op plaaslike vlak, die Gemeenskapswerksprogram, is eintlik die program wat gesny is hier. Ons mense in die Wes-Kaap moet dit verstaan in terme van die DA. [So our people have to understand that the Budget that creates work at local level, the Community Work Programme, is actually the programme that was cut here. Our people in the Western Cape should understand that in terms of the DA.]

At the same time the ANC remains convinced that this Provincial Government and this Department spends too much money on consultants. This Vote appropriates over R28 million, hon Speaker, to consultants.

The Department indicates that a budget of R3,5 million for GMT for Corporate Service is not enough, and this must surely be spitting in the faces of the poor people of this province struggling with the cost of living crisis. Again this is an instance where the Department complains on the one hand of budget cuts, yet on the other hand makes irrational allocations, such as in this case, but, hon Speaker, what also came out of the budget process was the fact that this Legislature, and I think this is a particular concern to all of us, is not playing its role.

You may recall, hon Speaker, that you received a letter from this Department

around the intention to implement a Section 139 processing in Kannaland.

Now it is clear to us that the Chairperson of the Committee never received the letter that was sent to your office as Speaker, because when there is a Section 139 intended, clearly that matter must be referred to this Legislature, but the hon member Sileku never received the letter, it appears ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Never.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...from your office. So in other words this Legislature never even discussed the matter of the Section 139 intervention.

So this shows that the very role of the Legislature is being undermined, but, hon Speaker, the actual story of this Vote really is about how the MEC in fact has directed this Department to wage party political battles in the Local Government sphere. That is actually what this is about. The real story is about how this MEC has covered up and turned a blind eye to allegations of corruption within DA municipalities. †Jy weet, agb Speaker, hulle praat van slim diewe. [You know, hon Speaker, they speak of clever thieves.]

†'n AGB LID: Slim diewe?

[An HON MEMBER: Clever thieves?]

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: Ja, slim diewe.

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes, clever thieves.]

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: In George is daar klomp slim diewe en ek wil 'n voorbeeld hierso noem waar slim diewe nie eintlik aangespreek is deur die LUK.

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: In George there are a bunch of clever thieves and I want to mention an example here where clever thieves were actually not spoken to by the MEC.]

Here you have again the memorandum which says that R200 million of George municipal funds were invested in Old Mutual without any procurement process and what it turns out is that Stag Cronjé, the MMC Finance at the time, that his son [Interjections.] – no, no, advert – that his son was the broker for Old Mutual ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: His son?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...who then received commission from this. [Interjections.]

†So die slim diewe, dit is die slim diewe waaroor ek praat. Die slim diewe binne in die DA word aangespreek ...[Tussenwerpsels.]

[So the clever thieves, it is the clever thieves I'm talking about. The clever thieves in the DA are spoken to...[Interjections.]]

The SPEAKER: Hon member ...[Interjections.]

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: ...deur [Tussenwerpsels.]  
die LUK. Dis baie slim ...[Tussenwerpsels.]

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...by [Interjections.] the  
MEC. It's very clever ...[Interjections.]]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, please take your seat. Hon Minister  
Meyer, is that a point of order?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Yes, hon Speaker, it is a point of order.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order? [Interjections.] Order, hon  
members!

Mr P MARRAN: What Rule? What Rule? What Rule? [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Marran, I do not need assistance, I think I am  
very competent to chair the Chair. Hon Minister, what is your point of order?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Because the hon member is so  
convincing, so persuasive about the matter [Interjections.] that he is putting  
and passionate about this statement that he made, I would like to know whether  
he is prepared to take a serious question? [Interjections.]



The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, are you prepared to a question?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: No. Unfortunately [Interjections.] not just due to ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Just for the record ...[intervenes]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Due to time constraints.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, I am still on the floor. Hon Minister, the hon member is not prepared to take a question.

Mr P MARRAN: It is not a point of order, Chair.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, then I accept his answer.

Mr P MARRAN: That is not a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, we are nearing the end of the day. That is parliamentary privilege. You can pose the question if the member is prepared to answer the question.

Mr P MARRAN: Yes, but he said it is a point of order, which it is not.

The SPEAKER: Okay, let us not get into the semantics of it. Hon Deputy

Chief Whip, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): No, hon Chair. Just to, it must be corrected that that was not a point of order that was being raised. He wanted to ask a question and in any case hon member Meyer never ask serious questions. So ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: That ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...it was not going to amount to anything.

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Chief Whip, that is now abusing the opportunity that you were afforded.

Mr P MARRAN: It is the same.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, hon members! [Interjections.] Posing a question to another member is not abusing the process or the Rules. There is parliamentary provision made for that. [Interjections.] We have been going through this for the past five years where you get up and ask if a member wants to take a question. [Interjections.]

We are nearly at the end of this term and we are discussing whether it is a point – I mean, really. Hon members, it is – we are three Orders away from ending this day, can I please ask that you work with me [Interjections.] – that you

work with me in order for us to get through the Orders of the Day. Hon member Dugmore, you may continue.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you. †Nee, ek is nog nie klaar oor die *issue* van die slim diewe. Ek wil net die punt klaarmaak oor die slim diewe. [ No, I'm not finished with the issue of the clever thieves. I just want to finish the point about the clever thieves.]

So even though this whole scam of the R200 million without procurement, benefiting the DA Maco's member's son, who was the broker for Old Mutual, this was sent, and I am glad that the Premier has walked in. This whole report was sent to the Premier's Department who supposedly are serious about forensics and they wrote back to the officials and they simply said, "This is not a matter of concern to us."

†So die slim diewe word deur MEC Bredell beskerm en die groot slim dief beskermer is eintlik die Premier van die provinsie. [Tussenwerpsels.]

[So the clever thieves are protected by MEC Bredell and the biggest clever thief protector is actually the Premier of the province. [Interjections.]]

The SPEAKER: Hon members...

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: Ja.

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore ...[Interjections.]

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: Ek sê hy is die beskermer van die grootste slim diewe, die einste Premier wat hier voor ons sit. The [LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: I say he's the protector of the biggest clever thieves, the very Premier sitting here in front of us.] He protects them.

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Chief Whip – hon Chief Whip, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Yes, Speaker. I rise on Rule 59, seeing that the Leader of the Official Opposition is indeed reflecting on a member of this House. Can you kindly rule, hon Speaker? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: I will do that. Hon member Dugmore, did you refer to any member of this House when you made that statement?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: I did not and I hope that I am not losing time, hon Speaker, during this interrogation. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members! Hon members!

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: Maar die punt, ek het nie gesê dat die LUK of die Premier 'n slim dief is nie, maar wat ek wel gesê het is dat hulle beskerm die slim diewe. Dit is wat ek gesê het.

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: But the point, I did not say that the MEC or the Premier is a clever thief, but what I did say is that they are protecting the clever thieves. That's what I said.]

The SPEAKER: But, hon member Dugmore, that is still reflecting on a member.

Mr P MARRAN: On which member?

The SPEAKER: The hon member has just said "the Premier".

An HON MEMBER: Ja.

The SPEAKER: So he has reflected upon a member. So, hon member Dugmore, that is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw that.

†n AGB LID: Trek terug.

[An HON MEMBER: Withdraw.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: No, I obviously accept your ruling and I will continue to say that †een van die grootste slim diewe in die land is Markus Jooste. [Tussenwerpsels.] We are very concerned at his passing, maar die groot dief ...[Tussenwerpsels.] [one of he biggest clever thieves in the country is Markus Jooste. [Interjections.] We are very concerned

at his passing, but the big thief ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members! Hon members ...[Interjections.]

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: ...Markus Jooste, het eintlik geld vir die party, die DA ...[Tussenwerpsels.]

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...Markus Jooste, actually gave money to the party, the DA ... [Interjections.]]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, hon member Dugmore, please take your seat.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Markus Jooste gave money to the DA ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, please take your seat.

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: ...en hy is 'n slim dief.

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...and he's a clever thief.]

An HON MEMBER: Where is your proof?

†Die LEIER VAN DIE AMPTELIKE OPPOSISIE: Hy was 'n slim dief.

[The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: He was a clever thief.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, please take your seat. Hon Chief Whip, I think you are rising. The hon member did in fact accept my ruling and withdrew.

An HON MEMBER: No, he did not.

An HON MEMBER: He did not.

An HON MEMBER: He did.

An HON MEMBER: He said, "I accept"

An HON MEMBER: He did.

The SPEAKER: He did do it. [Interjections.] I will revert back to Hansard and I will come back, but he in fact did do it. [Interjections.] Hon member Dugmore, you may continue. [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: And I think that it must go for the record that the late Markus Jooste, who defrauded public funds to the extent of R20 billion and more [Interjections.] is the same Markus Jooste who gave money to the DA, and it is this DA that does not want to tell South Africa how much they received, [Interjections.] but I want to go further than that, hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order! [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...we should not forget ...

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon members, there is a member on the floor. You are drowning out the member. If you do not agree with the input made then use the parliamentary mechanisms available to you to rectify them, but you cannot drown out the speaker. Hon member Dugmore, you may continue.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you, and, hon Speaker, the point I was making that the real story here in this Budget Vote is that we should not forget, hon Speaker, that this MEC has agreed with the DA in the City of Cape Town their refusal to answer questions posed by us as MPLs. That happens nowhere else in the country, but the City of Cape Town has refused using a legal opinion to answer any questions and MEC Bredell, through you, hon Speaker, has not challenged that.

In every other province MPLs can ask questions about any municipality except in the Western Cape. Why? [Interjections.] Because they are defending corruption within the City of Cape Town. [Interjections.]

Let us not also forget [Interjections.], let us not also forget that the Public Protector has twice found this MEC guilty of breaching the Code of Ethics. Found guilty of blatant party political interference ...[Interjections.]



The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, please take your seat. Hon Leader of Government Business, is that a point of order?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: It is a point of order, hon Speaker, because the Public Protector lost the case against Minister Bredell, so that is the untruth. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, that is not a point of order. [Interjections.] If you want to inform the House of any information or facts that are not correct you again can do so through a notice of motion to inform the House. [Interjections.] Hon Deputy Chief Whip, do you have a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): You have covered me very well, hon Speaker, thank you. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Leader of the Official Opposition, you may continue.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you, hon Speaker, and not only is it not a point of order, but it is actually a lie because the MEC and the Premier both know that in this House there was a tap on the wrist because of the guilty finding against MEC Bredell. Do not shake your head, [Interjections.] the fact is he was found guilty twice by the Public – and the point I am trying to make in this debate is that while the MEC gives us a particular story, what is basically happening here, and he is unfortunately having to manipulate his officials to have a party political approach

...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: dealing with problems  
...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, please take your seat.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...at Local Government.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, please take your seat. Hon Leader of  
Government Business, is that a point of order?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, I rise as Leader of  
Government Business and I will by your ruling table a substantive motion  
because what I hear now is simply not true, but I will give the opportunity to  
the House to take on my motion.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Leader of Government Business. That  
in fact is the parliamentary mechanism available. Hon member Dugmore,  
please continue. Hon member Dugmore ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: And to continue  
...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: ...can I please just ask you to speak to me.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Okay. Ja, thanks, hon Speaker, and just to continue. Let us talk about Matzikama.

Corruption by a DA councillor who informed Council that her father had passed on to secure a housing asset. Again a forensic audit that this MEC has never acted upon. The list is endless, where party political bias is affecting Local Government. Cederberg, dodgy land deals involving the DA coalition partner, Cederberg Eerste, and the Mayor, which once again MEC Bredell has ignored, as well as the blatant refusal of the DA and CE councillors to actually attend Council meetings, in breach of the code of conduct. He has ignored that.

Cederberg I have mentioned. In Saldanha the MEC ignored requests by myself as the Leader of Opposition, to provide a report from the Speaker as to why the protection provided to the late councillor Arthur Gqeba was withdrawn. It is common knowledge that that councillor was assassinated. The ward councillor was assassinated shortly afterwards, after the protection of that municipality, hon Speaker, was withdrawn.

Let us then go on to the City of Cape Town. There are more SIU investigations underway in the City of Cape Town than in any other municipality in South Africa. Has anyone in this House ever heard any comment about these investigations or these issues by this MEC?

So we can go on and on and we will in fact before the elections point out corruption in every single DA municipality, but the point I am trying to make here is while MEC Bredell is an affable person and, you know, he will come to this House, the problem is that he has used that portfolio to actually drive a party political agenda as proved and found guilty by the Public Protector. So that has had a negative effect on governance and it has actually put the officials of this Department into a very difficult situation.

In the City of Cape Town there is a forensic report into the allegations of corruption with the Housing Maintenance Department, running into over R600 million. This involves the so-called gangster company, the construction company, but never have you had any voice or talk of a Section 106 inquiry on this ever about the City of Cape Town despite this deep-seated corruption. What you instead have, hon Speaker, is the full weaponisation of this D by the DA MEC and what makes matters worse, hon Speaker, with the full blessings of the Premier of this province.

So in fact what you have †is 'n komplot om die slim diewe te beskerm. Die slim diewe wat kontrakte kry, die slim diewe wat ou geld gebruik om kontrakte kry word beskerm deur die Premier van die Wes-Kaap omdat hy vir sy LUK beskerm, en dit is die tipe stelery wat aangaan in die Stad Kaapstad en in baie ander munisipaliteite, en hulle moet nie dink dat die waarheid gaan nie uitkom, dit gaan uitkom. Die waarheid gaan uitkom in die SIU en die SIU is besig daarmee, [is a conspiracy to protect the clever thieves. The clever thieves who

get contracts, the clever thieves using old money to get contracts are protected by the Premier of the Western Cape because he's protecting his MEC, and that is the type of stealing going on in the City of Cape Town and in many other municipalities, and they must not think that the truth will not come out, it will come out. The truth will come out in the SIU and the SIU is busy with that,] and I actually want to say, hon Speaker, that I feel sympathy for those officials of this Department who have been dragged into this party political weaponisation against their will, and it is not something that should be done by officials, and yes, we obviously agree with the MEC about the problems of water.

We agree that those are issues that need a combined and a cooperative approach, but what concerns me is that there almost seems to be a celebration about the fact that there is a water infrastructure problem in Johannesburg, whereas would we really want to celebrate that there is a water infrastructure problem in Matzikama? Or would we want to focus on solving that particular problem? And I think this is the kind of cooperative governance that one would expect and maybe the hon member Bredell, in his defence, he is getting instructions from Steenhuisen, the Matric who wants him [Interjections.], who wants him to do, to use and to weaponize, or maybe he gets instructions from Helen Zille, but the reality is whether instructed or not, this particular MEC has done a disservice ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...has done a disservice  
...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: ...your time has expired.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...because of his party  
political manipulation and intervention.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, please take your seat. [Interjections.]  
Order, hon members! Hon – the next – order, hon members! Hon member  
Little, I recognise you.

Ms S LITTLE: You know, it is quite interesting to have come from a City of  
Cape Town to hear that no one is allowed to actually ask them any questions.  
There are major problems in the City of Cape Town. As much as everybody  
would like to know or to think that it is the best run Metro, there are major  
problems. We have got raw sewage pumping into the sea and we are wanting  
to build the desalination plant on the same coast where they are pumping raw  
sewage into the sea.

So I am hoping that that water will be distributed along that same coast to those  
folk that are living along the sea and let us hope and see whether or not they  
will be very happy to receive that desalination water that is being used from  
that ocean that is using polluted water, [Interjections.] but my question really  
is on the Vote 14, the core function and responsibility – there are eight core

functions. Hon Speaker, I am speaking. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Hon ...[Interjections.]

Ms S LITTLE: To support municipalities ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Please stop the member's time. [Interjections.] Hon member Little, you only have that privilege [Interjections.] without interjection on your maiden speech.

Ms S LITTLE: No, sir, thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: So as long as they do not drown you out and I can still hear you, interjections are allowed.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Speaker.

There are eight core functions of which [Interjections.] – to support municipalities with the development ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms S LITTLE: ...of legislative ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms S LITTLE: ...and compliances. To intervene where there are non-fulfilment of legislative. To support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities.

Now we have heard in this House how badly Kannaland is doing, but is that not the responsibility of this MEC? [Interjections.] Is it not his responsibility in terms of his core function to ensure that that municipality was functioning properly? [Interjections.] What has happened to the R40 million that the City of Cape Town is supposed to be paying back in terms of the investigation that found that the City was, it was illegal for them to issue that tender at the time?

Yet we do not hear that this Province is doing anything about the recovery of the R14 million ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms S LITTLE: ...for the tent in Strandfontein. [Interjections.] We sit here and we see R30 million being spent on a shot spotter and this Province says absolutely nothing.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Little ...[Interjections.]



Ms S LITTLE: We see ...[Interjections.]

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

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, sir.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. [Interjections.] Order, hon members!  
I recognise the hon member Sileku.

An HON MEMBER: Not so good. [Interjections.]

[The Deputy Speaker takes the Chair.]

Mr I M SILEKU: No, thank you very much †Somlomo [Speaker.]

†Ja, dit gebeur as jy laat by die partytjie kom, dan wil jy hê ons moet dieselfde *song* speel wat ons aan die begin gespeel het, want as dit kom by Kannaland was ons daar vir oorsig as gevolg van die Departement se ondersteuning in daardie spesifieke munisipaliteit. 'n Departement kan net soveel doen, [Yes, it happens when you arrive late at the party, then you want us to play the same song that was played at the beginning, because when it comes to Kannaland we were there for oversight as a result of the Department's support in that specific municipality. A department can only do so much,] and hon member Dugmore was part of our oversight. We have done all of them, †en een van die goed wat ons al gedoen het is om seker te maak die munisipaliteite wat vir Eskom skuld,

dat ons saam met Eskom kan praat en onderhandel dat hulle by hulle paaieente kan bly, maar – [and one of the things we have already done is to ensure that the municipalities owing Eskom money, that we together can speak to Eskom and negotiate that they can stay with their payments, but – ...]

Hon Deputy Speaker, hon Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, good afternoon, †*goeiemiddag*, [Good afternoon]

South Africa stands at a crossroads and the decision we make at a local government level will determine the fate of our nation. For too long we have witnessed the consequences of mismanagement and neglect, particularly under the rule of the ANC, but today I stand before you not just to point out the failures of the past, but to ignite the spark of change that will rescue South Africa and keep the Western Cape DA.

The key to our province's salvation lies in the very foundation of our communities, our sub-National Governments. It is here at the grassroots levels that the seeds of progress must be sown. We cannot expect to thrive as a nation if our cities and towns are crippled by inefficiency and corruption.

In the three decades of our democracy a great deal has been achieved to bridge the inequality gap in our society. With all that said, we cannot be oblivious of the stark reality of the widening socio-economic inequality.

With this said, it is the responsibility of every sphere of government to

champion and spearhead noteworthy programmes and projects that will uplift the dignity of our citizens. One province that is standing as a beacon of hope and already making great strides in delivering world class services to its residents is the Western Cape †intshonakoloni.[colony.]

The Western Cape is the only province where unemployment is going down and this province often accounts for the most jobs created in the entire country, South Africa. Two-thirds of all jobs created in this country over the last four to five years come from the Western Cape.

The Western Cape Government last year achieved its best audit outcomes in five years with all departments receiving unqualified clean audits. This, hon Speaker, is exactly why various reports, such as Stats SA, the Blue, Green and No Drop Report and the Auditor-General Report all found that the best basic services were being delivered in the Western Cape.

It is clear, clean governance directly translates to better basic services for our residents. Unfortunately municipalities like Knysna, Beaufort West, where I was born, Theewaterskloof, where I started my politics, Laingsburg and Kannaland are all governed by the ANC and its allies. Coincidentally these municipalities are the same municipalities where services are non-existent.

A report tabled in the National Council of Provinces, where I come from, found that Knysna, Kannaland and Beaufort West had more than 10% of residents who do not have access to safe drinking water. Laingsburg and

Theewaterskloof were amongst the worst performers when it came to households with access to electricity.

Knysna, under the leadership of the PA and ANC, has seen service delivery in the municipality totally collapsed. A lot has been written about Knysna, a lot has been said by the Premier about that particular state of municipality. As a result, as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee and as a member of the DA, we have since reported the Knysna Municipality to the South African Human Rights Commission and they have acknowledged our letter and they will inform us in terms of their investigation.

The municipality's negligence in ensuring the safety and security of the reservoir *is* †onaanvaarbaar [unacceptable]. It is unacceptable. †Hulle versuim. Om nie so 'n gebeurtenis te voorkom nie is 'n duidelike verbreking van hulle plig. Dit het nie net gelei tot die moeisame en duur taak om waterpype skoon te maak en met droë ys te blaas nie, maar dit het ook die lewens van inwoners in gevaar gestel wat onwetend besmette water gedrink het.

Deur te versuim om skoon en veilig drinkwater te verskaf het die munisipaliteit die fundamentele menseregte van Knysna se inwoners gruwelik geskend.

[They neglect. To not prevent such a event is a clear breach of their obligation. It not only led to the cumbersome and expensive task to clear the waterpipes and blow it out with dry ice, but it also put the lives of residents at risk who unknowingly drank contaminated water.

By neglecting to provide clean and safe drinking water the municipality blatantly violated the fundamental human rights of Knysna's residents.]

Theewaterskloof, under the leadership of the ANC, PA and GOOD, hon member Little, used public funds to send their Deputy Mayor, who is your member, John Michaels, and Speaker, to France to attend the Rugby World Cup while residents ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member ...[intervenes]

Mr I M SILEKU: ...suffer from poor service delivery ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, if you can please take your seat, there is a hand. Yes, Deputy Chief Whip?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon member Sileku, whom the DA does not have much confidence in, is [Interjections.] – I want to raise two issues ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Hon member, Sayed...

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): As I – that is just an introduction.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, what is your point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): He is speaking directly to ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...hon member Little and that is wrong. He speaks directly to hon member Little. Number two, he is making a false allegation. He needs to come with a substantive motion. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you very much. Hon member Sileku, please speak to me, through me and then you may address and I cannot verify false statements. If there is, please bring a substantive motion. Thank you, you may proceed.

Mr I M SILEKU: Let me start from the beginning.

Theewaterskloof, under the leadership of ANC, PA, GOOD, used public funds to send the Deputy Mayor and the Speaker to France to go and watch the World Cup, [Interjections.] while residents suffer from poor service delivery ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Order, hon members. You may proceed. Hon Premier. You may proceed. [Interjections.]

Mr I M SILEKU: Just go and drive around, hon member Dugmore, as the chief negotiator that sold Theewaterskloof †*vir n appel en n ei* [for a mere song] to Gayton McKenzie, to see the state of roads in that municipality. [Interjections.] Because you were there, when I went out of the meeting with Gayton, you went in and you gave him everything that he wanted. He wanted to be the Mayor and we said, "We are not going to give you the Mayorship." Because you were so hungry to be in government you gave it to him and look at Theewaterskloof today.

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: Point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse, hon member Nkondlo? Is your hand up? I did not see it up on the screen. [Interjections.]

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: My hand is up. Why are you allowing hon member Sileku ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it you? Sorry, I thought it is coming from my computer. [Interjections.] Is it you, hon member? Have you put your hand up?

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, what is your point of order?

†Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: Lomfo umi phambikwam ulaphile akasathethi

tuu...[This man who is front of me is quiet and no longer speaks...]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Bakubaku-Vos, what is your point of order?

†Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: Ipoint of order yam hon Deputy Speaker lomfo wakwa Sileku uMr Aphile akasatheti ngoku nospeaker uthe... [My point of order is that this Sileku guy Mr Aphile no longer speaks now also the speaker...]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, no, hon member, there is no such thing as that point, there is no point of order.

†Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: andikaqhibi awivanga ndimamele! [I am not done yet you didn't hear me, listen to me!]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, unless it is a point of order.

Ms N G BAKABAKU-VOS: †maka thethe nawe... [let him speak to you...] hon Deputy Speaker, you must listen carefully.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, no, no.

Ms N G BAKABAKU-VOS: Do not defend...



The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It does not work like that.

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: I did not even state what I want to say.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay.

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: You are already defending.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then please tell me ...[Interjections.]

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: What is your problem?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: ...what your point of order is.

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: You are so bias.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Bakubaku-Vos.

Ms N G BAKUBAKU-VOS: I am saying this man is speaking to the hon member straight. He does not speak through you. That is what I was saying.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already addressed that. You cannot do a point of order on a point of order. Can we just say there is no point of order from which you have just raised, stood up for. You may proceed.

Mr I M SILEKU: Hon Deputy Speaker, I got the memo while I was having lunch. That what I am experiencing I will be experiencing. So there was a meeting in my absence about my, about heckling of me [Interjections.]. So I am not surprised.

Considering the lack of transparency by the Theewaterskloof Municipality surrounding the Deputy Mayor and the Speaker's 2023 Rugby World Cup trip. The Democratic Alliance has initiated proceedings under the Promotion of Access to Information Act to compel the Municipality to disclose pertinent details, which acknowledgement we have received from the Municipality two days ago. Despite repeated attempts to obtain information regarding this trip through written questions, the Municipality has remained uncooperative.

It is deeply concerning that under the current leadership the Theewaterskloof Municipality has been tainted by allegations of corruption and incompetence, resulting in a marked decline in the provision of essential services. Public officials must prioritise the welfare of the citizens they serve above personal interests. They have dodged every attempt so far to come clean about this particular trip. We are saying if you have nothing to hide, show us who paid for this trip. Fairness and transparency should be the blueprint for every municipality in their mission to deliver services and opportunities.

We also welcome the action taken by the Western Cape Government reporting this corrupt municipality to the SIU. Beaufort West and Laingsburg, both under the leadership [Interjections.] ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

Mr I M SILEKU: ...of the ANC ...[Incomplete.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Apologies, hon – can we please have some order in the House that I can actually hear the hon member Sileku.

Mr I M SILEKU: †Baie dankie, tog. [Thank you very much.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, you may proceed, hon member Sileku. Yes, you may.

Mr I M SILEKU: Okay. Beaufort and Laingsburg, both under the leadership of the ANC/PA, have consistently been named by the Auditor-General as the worst performing municipality in the entire province. While Beaufort West promised to build the next Dubai, the reality is that they have sewage pipes that run just into the Karoo and keep dumping sewage everywhere. †Somlomo [Speaker] it is very important for communities and residents to understand their rights, which are clearly articulated and enshrined in the Constitution. [Interjections.] Communities need to appreciate and understand their vested powers to hold their municipalities accountable where governance is not up to standard. Communities should not accept mediocre and substandard service delivery. Residents should detect and reject any form of corruption, tender irregularities, maladministration, nepotism, cadre deployment from their

municipality. Where these negative elements are witnessed communities should be intolerant and bring those accused of such criminal acts to book.

†Somlomo [Speaker] this DA Government would love to act against corrupt municipalities, but currently it is proving difficult to do so. Enforcing compliance with the law amongst municipalities proves to be a difficult task. Even the execution of seemingly straightforward measures, such as support plan, has morphed into a difficult process.

The Democratic Alliance therefore welcomes the Western Cape Monitoring and Support of Municipalities Amendment Bill. [Interjections.] This legislation marks a significant stride forward, enhancing and finetuning the mechanisms available for us for offering support and monitoring local administration in the Western Cape.

Hon colleagues, it is clear, while the DA builds, the ANC, GOOD and PA coalition of corruption destroys. A vote for GOOD, PA, ANC is a vote for corruption.

†Somlomo [Speaker] we cannot hope to build a better future if our basic services are inadequate and unreliable. It is time to reclaim corrupt municipalities from the grip of GOOD, ANC, PA mismanagement and deliver world class services to every corner of our province.

Deputy Speaker, allow me the opportunity to thank the members that I was

afforded an opportunity to serve as their Chairperson for the last few months and I would leave them with a few questions as well because I have some story to tell about each and every member and I need to appreciate that at least today hon member Dugmore is in the House instead of being online, and, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, as hon member Dugmore spoke about human rights as the self-appointed spokesperson on human rights in this particular Parliament, I would just talk about there is something that I agree with him on, it is that water is life and sanitation is dignity. and I would just want to ask him a question.

Where was he when the dignity of the people of Knysna were tampered with? When people were without water, where was he? †Hy was nêrens. [He was nowhere.] It was this Government, this Local Government, that sent officials to go and give the people of Knysna their dignity back. [Interjections.] It was too late when you went there.

Secondly, as the chief negotiator of the coalition in Theewaterskloof, where was he, [Interjections.] where is he when officials are being ill-treated and suspended for no reasons? Where is he? Nowhere to be found.

Where was he when the poorest municipality, who is indigent, percentage is more than 50%, charged R20 extra for the residents of Theewaterskloof? Where was he?

†'n AGB LID: Nêrens.

[An HON MEMBER: Nowhere.]

Mr I M SILEKU: When the poorest municipality of Theewaterskloof spent R4,3 million on security without any report from SAPS about their safety, did he say something? He never said anything.

Where was he when the Deputy Mayor and the Speaker were accused of GBV? Where was he? He never mentioned, he never condemned it. Now he wants to come up and try to talk to us about human rights. You must practise what you preach and stop sleeping when we are still doing our work. [Interjections.]

Let me go to GOOD. In closing let me go to GOOD. You know what is said about GOOD? [Interjections.] You know what is said about GOOD? The only people that you will see servicing in this particular House are only people that are close to Brett Herron. If you are close to Brett Herron you will be promoted because you are a, "Yes, *baas*," or a, "No, *baas*," and I am not surprised that we have a new member now because she belongs to the faction of Brett, and that is why they do not say anything about the issues that are affecting real Deputy Mayor, John Michaels, into Theewaterskloof. There is a case against him. [Interjections.] There was a report that was instituted by the Council where Council paid money to an investigator and then the report said there was *prima facie* evidence for the Deputy Mayor to answer on sexual allegations, and what did they do? Because whenever there is something that happens against him, he threatens them of leaving the coalition and then they said, "Okay, no, we are going to appoint another investigator."

No surprise the second report of the investigator said there was nothing from the Deputy Mayor. You see?

So it is also unfortunate that you have come at the end of the term. I would have loved to engage with you and give you some lessons in terms of how you operate in this sphere of government.

With those few words, I support the Budget Vote. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Sileku. I now recognise – order hon members! [Interjections.] Order ...[Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Chairperson ...[intervenes]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Bredell, if you can just sit for a moment. [Interjections.] Minister Bredell, just take your seat. Hon members, I would like to move on to the Minister for his final remarks. I recognise you, hon Minister Bredell.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, ja, thank you for the participation in the debate. Local Government is always a heated topic.

I am a bit worried that the hon member Dugmore does not understand how the rule of law works. There is lots of rumours, hon member Dugmore, lots of rumours. I do not act on rumours, I act on facts because we must go to court and we must prove and if we cannot prove then we lose court cases.

The forensics within George, we institute the four forensic investigations. We hand it over to the NPA. It is not our fault that it is now two years later and nothing has happened, and it is against ex-DA councillors and it is [Interjections.] against ex-DA councillors.

So, hon Chair, there is no bias from this Department. We want good governance, and I have always stated it, that we will be strict on any DA government because that is our brand. It is good governance. So we will not hide, we need to get to these people, but, you know, in the last 30 years if the ANC has not bankrupted this country through corruption, the NPA, we might be able to capacitate that office so that we can bring these thieves in front of the courts, but we need always to be fair because there is something like the rule of law that does matter for us that care about the democracy.

On the Public Protector. You know, the hon member Dugmore must just read the outcome of the court case. †Dit lees onder andere soos volg, as hy kyk na wat daar staan [It reads amongst others as follows, if he looks at what it says:]

"That the Public Protector was guilty of material error in law."



[Interjections.] That is what the judge said against that court case. That was the case against me. So you must go and read the cases. That is what is standing there.

So, hon Chair, [Interjections.] we have never said that everything is fine in all our municipalities. [Interjections.] There is still a lot of work ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ...that we need to do. Part of our big problem, and I think it was also that we made a mistake that we actually underestimated the pressure that population movement and growth put on infrastructure. So we fall behind.

Now we must catch up and the City is busy with that programme and a lot of municipalities. We work very hard in Matzikama. Matzikama's water problems started off by actually people trying to destabilise the municipality through cutting their water and there was a lot of illegal stuff going on and we are busy working with the municipalities. We have got geohydrologists there, we have got engineers there, but it is also not our function to run the municipalities.

So – and that is, to hon member Little, that it is not our job to run municipalities, we support them, we intervene where necessary and the legislation on intervening, what we need to – [Interjections.] ja, you see there is interference, because as soon as it is [Interjections.], there is political then they make it politics. If they do not serve the people, it does not matter which political party. [Interjections.]

Now when we try to interfere according to the law, it is a very difficult process because we have got democratic elections and the courts will tell you that is when you solve the issues within Local Government, the people must actually get what they voted for, but when you get a body in water, then you must deal with it. When you get rats running in your town because of waste not being picked up, you must deal with it, and we try to send our engineers to the municipalities and you can look at two different scenarios.

A municipality where we have done a 139(5), a financial recovery plan on the one hand, and a Beaufort West Municipality on the other hand. As soon as there was a leadership change and they started to work with us, there is change in Beaufort West. Slowly, but it is getting there.

So the municipalities must, or the people in the municipalities must realise they get what they vote for. We can support them, but we cannot run their municipalities from Cape Town.

To the hon member Isaac, thank you very much for your leadership, your

Chairmanship over the years. You are again one of those people that held us accountable, that will call us in and I understand that the ANC will not understand this because they do not know how we operate. Although we are colleagues ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ...you have got the responsibility to hold me accountable so that we can serve the people of this province. [Interjections.]

†So die ANC ...[Tussenwerpsels.] [So the ANC ... [Interjections.]]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

†Die MINISTER VAN PLAASLIKE REGERING, OMGEWINGSAKE EN ONTWIKKELINGSBEPLANNING: ...sal dit nooit verstaan nie, agb Adjunkspeaker, so hoe meer hulle kritiseer, hoe meer wys dit ons is op die regte pad. Ek wil vir almal wat hierdie begroting ondersteun baie dankie sê en nogmaals dankie vir die ondersteuning vir hierdie begroting.

[The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ... will never understand it, hon Deputy Speaker, so the more they criticise, the more it shows us that we are on the right track. I want to thank all who support this budget, and once again thank

you for the support of this budget.]

†Die ADJUNKSPEAKER: Baie dankie, agb Minister.

[The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister.] That brings us to the end of Vote 14. I will suspend the House for 5 minutes to allow new guests to enter before we start the next Vote. Thank you.

**[Business of the House paused for clearing of bays.]**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, you may be seated. Alright, order. The Secretary will read the Sixth Order of the Day.

†Die SEKRETARIS: Debat oor Begrotingpos 8: Mobiliteit – Wes-Kaapse Begrotingswetsontwerp.

[The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 8: Mobility – Western Cape Appropriation Bill.]

† ‘n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor!

[An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!]

†Die ADJINKSPEAKER: Baie dankie, Sekretaris.

[The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Secretary.] I now see the hon Minister Mackenzie.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier

of the Western Cape, hon Cabinet members, hon members, colleagues, our special guests who are joining us today, people of the Western Cape.

Mobility is about enabling the Western Cape to thrive. We have a Mobility Budget of R9,6-billion for the three-year MTEF, an allocation of R3-billion for the 2024/2025 financial year. This budget and everything we do, support safety and jobs in our province. Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to highlight what that we are not working on our transport mandate in silo. We are a joined-up Government in a joined-up province, committed to optimising our resources and innovating to deliver the best impact to the people of the Western Cape. With this coordinated approach, the Western Cape Government is not only enabling job creation, but we are also helping our residents to access opportunities.

The hon Premier of the Western Cape made a commitment to deliver a transport voucher for people who are unemployed. As Mobility, we have made this happen. Hon Deputy Speaker, this is how the DA governs: a promise is made, a promise is delivered.

Hon members, we have heard from jobseekers over and over again that one of their biggest hurdles is the cost of transport. The Western Cape Government is now providing tangible transport to support, for the many people who are actively looking for work, as part of our Growth for Jobs strategy. We are doing everything we can to help grow the economy, create jobs, and tackle unemployment. This is how we are creating hope in our province.

Our job seeker travel voucher called Getting YOU to Work, is removing transport barriers and enabling access to job opportunities for unemployed jobseekers. The voucher provides 12 free rides on the Golden Arrow Bus Services on weekdays between 8 AM and 4 PM. On this note, hon members, I am proud to welcome Tyler Links here with us this afternoon in the speakers bay. Welcome Tyler. This young lady who lives with her grandmother in Strandfontein, successfully landed a job at the call centre called Call-Lab, welcome Cheryl, earlier this month. Our Getting YOU to Work travel voucher covered her trip for attending the interview, including ten additional trips. She did not have to spend a cent from getting from Strandfontein to Salt River and home again afterwards. She is now fully employed and will one day become a taxpayer in this province and the country. Welcome, Tyler. [Applause.]

I want to thank the employers who have registered to partner with us on this initiative. Two of the first employers to have offered free travel vouchers during the recruitment stand out and are here with us today. Ms Van der Merwe from GP Retail and Cheryl Paarwater from Call-Lab, welcome to our Parliament and thank you for helping to reduce unemployment in this country.

Hon members, between the two of them, we have seen seven hopeful job applicants entering employment with the help of our Getting YOU to Work vouchers. Seven lives changed, seven households with a brighter future, seven families with hope and optimism enabled by Mobility. I am excited to see more and more employers signing up on our online portal and registering their

interview candidates. We have committed R7,5-million to this programme for the year ahead.

Hon member, through the R1,3-billion Transport Operations Grant, we manage and monitor subsidised transport services such as Golden Arrow Bus Services in the Western Cape. These scheduled bus services which transport 240 000 passengers daily are a vital part of our public transport system and the economy in Cape Town. Golden Arrow was a beacon of stability while our commuters have been failed by the decline of our rail system by National Government.

However, hon members, the ground allocation from National Government has fallen behind the rate of inflation for Transport, which has risen significantly over the last few years due to fuel price increases. This ultimately means that the petrol covers fewer kilometres. This is a cause exasperated by loadshedding and the detrimental effect of rolling blackouts on our systems.

Hon Speaker, hon Deputy Speaker, apologies, considering the state of affairs and to protect the commuter, we engage Golden Arrow Bus Services continuously to understand operational costs and advocate for minimal fair increases. We need to reduce the impact of transport costs on passengers as far as possible. I want to thank Golden Arrow for their commitment in working with us, represented here by Mr Francois Meyer and Mr Derick Meyer, the CEO and GM respectively. Thank you for being here today and for partnering with us in providing safe, reliable transport to the people of the Western Cape.

Hon members, another crucial stakeholder is Dial-a-Ride. Dial-a-Ride provides subsidised services in the Metro. They provide a curb-to-curb service for people with disabilities to be able to access economic opportunities, as well as social and health facilities. Despite the severe pressures on our budget, despite the budget cut, we have managed to hold onto that allocation of R10-million to the City of Cape Town and want to thank our Head of Department, Ms Marissa Moore, who fought hard for keeping that R10-million to the City of Cape Town to ensure disabled persons are not severely affected by the budget cuts.

Hon members, in George, the Western Cape Government has demonstrated real success with the George integrated public transport. GoGeorge busses are getting to work literally with over 4-million passenger trips a year. More than 70% of George households make use of the GoGeorge bus services. Residents are connected to work opportunities with an affordable, safe, and reliable public transport service.

In the past year, our Mobility team succeeded in rolling out the GoGeorge service in Thembalethu, after countless obstacles and setbacks with illegal transport operators in the area and the associated risk. And on this point, I want to thank hon Mvimbi who really took leadership when there were stakeholders and individuals who tried to hold back, and he put me in touch with those individuals and helped rolling out that service. Well done, hon Mvimbi. It shows leadership from your part.



The rollout was years in the making, but we did not back down from delivering the service to the people of Thembalethu who deserve a service like everybody else. The people of Thembalethu can now access opportunities, education, social and Government services. Since the launch of these new routes, passenger numbers have doubled. Since the launch of these new routes, passenger numbers have doubled.

GoGeorge is the top performing public transport service in the country, with an on-time service of 92% and over 90% passenger satisfaction rate. And hon members, in this officials' bay we see Ms Deidre Ribbonaar, who has been working tirelessly over many years to make this service a reality. Thank you, Ms Deidre Ribbonaar and your team, and everyone on the ground who has been working for years in getting the people of Thembalethu this great service. Well done!

Hon Deputy Speaker, the impact of this is not just transport service and its operational service, GoGeorge is a transformative boost to the economy in an important region of the Western Cape. In George, Mobility is about growing the economy that will in turn create more jobs. Jobs is what our people hope for and what they deserve, and what we are delivering. We are enabling immediate benefits and economic opportunities in areas like Thembalethu, where I visited some vendors selling GoGeorge tickets.

These small business owners with kiosks are benefitting from our R320-million investment and in turn, they are creating additional opportunities in the

community. Just one of the vendors I met on a Sunday afternoon, Nomzamo Nhlapo, explained to me that she was making R14 000 a month selling GoGeorge tickets and she has now employed an additional person working with her in Thembaletu. That is just incredible success.

Hon Deputy Speaker, over 600 job opportunities have been created, including bus drivers, maintenance staff, vendors, and administrative positions. I can say with confidence that this partnership between provincial, local and national government is the first full transformational project done in collaboration with the minibus taxi industry in George, and it is a great success. Hon members, the most recent passenger satisfaction survey's results overwhelmingly indicate that GoGeorge passengers save money, they feel safe, and they can rely on getting to where they need to be on time.

Hon Deputy Speaker, another area of excellence and which requires improvement and innovation by our Mobility team is our hard work in formalising the minibus taxi industry to provide dignified, safe, and a reliable service to commuters. In this spirit, let me welcome the SANTACO Executive members who are with us today, led by the Chairperson, Mr Mandla Hermanus and Mr Ashley October. Thank you for joining us today.

Hon members, we saw the detrimental impact on the minibus taxi operations coming to a standstill last year. They are there on top, hon members. I see everybody is looking. Mr Hermanus, just wave for us there. They are on top there.

Hon members, we are all resolute that violence is not acceptable and cannot result in progress. The progress we will make will be due to collective effort in tackling and sitting around the table. In the Minibus Taxi Task Team, which I set up almost a year ago, we are continuing to work closely with SANTACO Western Cape and the City of Cape Town, to address various deep-rooted challenges in the minibus taxi industry that I know as fact, the leadership in the minibus taxi industry want to address those issues. We have seen concrete outcomes from the Task Team, including the review of our operating licence conditions and the breakthrough of longstanding regulatory blockages we will continue to work on resolving.

I am particularly excited, hon members, about the plans for the Shayela Smart Model which will improve minibus taxi operations and most importantly, the experience of our passengers which is all our customers. A lot was achieved by our Mobility team through the Blue Dot programme, and we are now building on those foundations and the lessons learnt from the past. The main elements of the Shayela Smart Model are the tracking of vehicles, training for drivers and operators, and an innovative solution for ranking, which is an ongoing challenge in Cape Town and across the Western Cape.

Using technology, we will be tracking and developing a strategic stop-and-go rotational stop system with remote holding areas which has already been piloted in the Cape Town CBD. The Shayela Smart programme will be developed this year in conjunction with the City of Cape Town and SANTACO

Western Cape and will inform our Medium-Term expenditure in support of safer minibus taxi services. This is in addition to the training and formalisation support provided through our provincial sustainable programme through the minibus taxi industry.

Hon members of the House, we are maximising our freight management intervention with an R8-million budget while strengthening our relationship with our key partners. Hon Deputy Speaker, the collapse of Transnet and the logistical systems in South Africa has dealt a devastating blow to the private sector and our economy. A functioning freight transport is critical for enabling economic growth and job creation.

That is why I am so positive to see when I saw the CEO of Transnet coming to a meeting, we invited her. The CEO was at that time the Acting CEO of Transnet Freight Rail, who also spent some time with us in George to understand the logistical and freight challenges we are experiencing. Hopefully, another day, a permanently employed or at least one endorsed by Cabinet, will continue to work with us to sort out freight problems in the Western Cape.

Our Freight Demand Module as the Western Cape Government developed by the Mobility team is just one of three seven freight initiatives run by my Department, is enabling and supporting the movement of goods while we urgently work with our partners to fix freight and logistic challenges in the Western Cape. The collaboration will include measures to unblock the Port of

Cape Town includes private sector participation and enhances inter-model services. And there also, come in our truck drivers and our partners providing this service. And I want to welcome Nicci from Safer Transport who is joining us, Nicci Scott, who is also working to assist truck drivers and assist the challenges they are facing, too.

Hon members, many of you travel across the Western Cape. We have seen the dire state of our truck stops, of truck drivers who spend hours and days in trucks in bringing products that all of us eat here in this room. Food does not teleport to our stomachs. People transport it to our stomachs and truck drivers and transporters are those critical partners. And we have to work and provide safer stops for them. So, thank you, Nicci and the team, for doing good work and trying to provide safer stops for truck drivers, who are women and men using that service.

*[The Speaker takes the Chair.]*

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government believe firmly in partnership and collaborating for the benefit of residents across our province. Sorry. This year, we are providing more than R7-million in support to municipalities for the integrated transport plans. This support includes the development, review, and assessment of ITPs to ensure that pedestrians and cyclers are prioritised alongside a functional and sustainable transport system.

Hon members, when we look at our Mobility needs to enable this province to

thrive, we are not just focused on large scale interventions like GoGeorge, Golden Arrow Bus Services, the minibus taxi industry and assisting Transnet to get their house in order, we are also working on immediate solutions for large public transport and the freight crisis but dedicated long-term mobility solutions.

Our Bicycle Distribution Project with a R4-million boost this year, will boost community safety, scholar transport and the local economy while promoting bicycles as a sustainable, affordable, and healthy transport mode. Hon members, bicycles change lives. Getting people to work affordably, giving youngsters fun and healthy recreational opportunities and empowering Neighbourhood Watch on their patrols. It is critical for us as the Mobility Department. We all know the theory, but when you hear it firsthand from people whose lives have been changed by our Bicycle Distribution Project, the impact is real.

At our recent Go George Bicycle Day Event where we handed over 60 bicycles to various beneficiaries, I met Nomzamo and Thile, a tourism entrepreneur and previous beneficiary of our programme. Unfortunately, she cannot be here today because she is doing deliveries in George. A dedicated entrepreneur. Nomzamo shared with us how bicycles have enabled her business, kept her healthy and kept money in her pocket that would have been spent on petrol.

We do not just hand over bicycles and disappear, this particular event includes mechanic training, learn-to-ride and safe cycling lessons while previous

recipients could bring bicycles for a check up and get minor repairs and maintenance done. And in this regard, I want to thank our partners Neil and Liz from PPA, who have been working on this programme for many years in ensuring that the beneficiaries of bicycles, that it changes their lives. Well done, guys, and thank you for joining us today. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Where are they sitting?

An HON MEMBER: Right behind you.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: So, why do they not ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Hon Dugmore, you can look out. Hon members, we know the potential impact of growing a cycling industry in the local community. Another example of this is Mzikhona. Welcome Mzi. Mzi is also up there, hon members. Mzi runs the Langa bicycle hub, and he is actively transforming his community with job opportunities, safety patrols, sustainable transport and fun activities for the youngsters who are so at risk of getting sucked into crime and gangs.

Hon members, one of the clearest demonstrations is Bicycle Enables Opportunity is a private sector introduction of electric bicycles into the last mile delivery and Craig Atkinson was going to join us today, but I do not think he is here. Oh yes, oh! Craig is here! Welcome, Craig. Craig Atkinson of the

Green Riders for your remarkable effort to create over 1 000 green mobility jobs with a growing fleet of mobility vehicles that we have seen across Cape Town. Thank you, Craig and your team, and we are looking forward ...[Applause.] to an innovative partnership I cannot announce yet. I am waiting for my colleagues in the City of Cape Town to sign the letter and we will announce it in due course. Let me leave it at that.

Hon members, that is not just the only company. I want to welcome former Springbok, James Dalton, who is also with us today not giving us rugby lessons, and Gert. They are also here, also in the electric mobility space and Gert was also the only person who has cycled here today, hon members. He did not take a vehicle. So, thank you, Gert. [Applause.]

And, hon members, we also have Mr Ashik Mallgee. Where is Ashik? There is Ashik sitting. Ashik is the CEO of Valternative. They have also provided, with their partners Uber, the Electric Vehicle Space, and they have just, I will announce it on their behalf because they were in Mitchells Plain, they have employed 26 new entrants – that is 26 brand new jobs in Mitchells Plain entering the e-bike market. So, you see people cycling around Mitchells Plain in electric vehicles. Thank you, Ashik and your team. Thank you for being here, sir, this afternoon. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, on that note, I want to encourage all members here to please join me next year as we do the Cape Town Cycle Tour and see for themselves how bicycles change lives. I did not complete the race in record time this year, I



must admit, but I did complete it. So, please hon members, get training and join us next year as we complete the Cape Town Cycle Tour.

Hon members, we are working hard to position our province on the future of mobility, including a transition to low carbon transport systems and reducing greenhouse emissions. As we all know, hon members, we have our own electric vehicle strategy as the Western Cape and also, the first province in South Africa to lawfully use drones in mountain search and rescue operations. I saw Captain Fabian here with us. He is there and it is great that our emergency teams now use drones for rescuing. It is absolutely incredible stuff what we are doing here in the Western Cape. Our drone strategy, which will be ready for adoption by Cabinet soon, will be the first provincial developed strategy including our other departments, the private sector and academia to ensure drones become a great service for the people of the Western Cape.

Hon members, we are also exploring a business gains of drones as a service for GMD client institutions. This business model will enable clients to access advanced drone technology without upfront investment through a subscription service of 'per use' fees for a drone service. That will be the first in the country. Wherever possible, our Department is pushing for Mobility to enable economic growth and livelihoods.

Hon members, we have committed more than R80-million for the upcoming year for our Integrated Transport Hub to drive coordination between Disaster Management, Health and Wellness, Police Oversight and Community Safety,

and partners outside our Provincial Government. We have sophisticated technology and systems for our service delivery, and we are making sure they are integrated for optimal impact. The Integrated Transport Hub has already established essential improvements in their efficiency and outcomes of our Transport Regulation, Traffic Law Enforcement and Public Transport Management. The system developed through this hub plays a critical role in rolling out priority projects such as our Job Seeker Travel Voucher and our freight strategy.

Hon members, let me remind this House that our Mobility Department contributes a massive portion of our Western Cape provincial own revenue, collecting nearly R2,2-billion through our motor vehicle licence fees. So, all hon members of this House who pay their motor vehicle licences, thank you for contributing to our R2,2-billion. This money is shared between the Department of Infrastructure and our Mobility Department for our Western Cape's beautiful roads and our 24 hour, 7 days a week Traffic Law Enforcement that makes you feel safe on our beautiful roads. This is how we make the Western Cape work.

This coming year, we will pay R454-million of agency fees to municipalities who collect the licencing fees, creating jobs and helping to build municipalities to work. Hon members, we are investing significant resources in our traffic management. Nearly R500-million to make our rails safer. Safety is directly related to job creation and enabling economic growth. We see outstanding results from our provincial traffic services working in collaboration with other

agencies to apprehend habitual offenders and interrupt criminal operations on our roads. I commend our officers for their hard work, dedication, and success.

These dedicated men and women who are here with us today, our special team, if they can stand up, joining us from Laingsburg. Welcome team and thank you for being here. They represent more than 600 officers working across the Western Cape. We obviously cannot have all of them in the House today, hon members, otherwise our roads will be unmanaged, and you do not want that because they are deployed. So, I want to thank this team who are with us today. They are working incredibly hard to make our roads safe.

And now, if I can just tell a story, hon members. We all know the Western Cape is not a drug-producing province. We import drugs and mainly in the Western Cape. So, the work that our provincial traffic officers do, particularly those on our roads whether the N1, N2, N7, Beaufort West, Laingsburg, Vredendal, I appreciate them immensely, obviously alongside our other colleagues as well. But when they take kilogrammes and kilogrammes of narcotics and illegal substances, whether it is abalone or any other product off our roads coming into the Western Cape, they contribute immensely to making our roads and our province safer. And I want to thank them for that. You are appreciated. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Hon members ...[Applause.] earlier this year I welcomed 136 traffic students at our Gene Louw College for the 2024 intake. The training programme is no joke with serious physical and academic demands, it is an exceptional work

opportunity. Close to 90% of these students, once they have graduated, will join our provincial traffic services with a small group who will be employed at our municipalities. All of them will make the Western Cape safer for you.

Hon members, these traffic officers in training inspire hope for their families and for the future road safety efforts in our Western Cape. On Saturday, at the Gene Louw Traffic College, we officially launched our Easter Safety Programme where we are offering free vehicle testing to help motorists prepare for long distance or short distance travel. We need all road users to take personal responsibility for road safety.

Hon Speaker, hon Deputy Speaker, I also want to encourage all hon members in this House to lead by example and take your vehicles to Gene Louw Traffic College for a check in so that you, also, arrive safely home and at your destinations. We are offering this service until Thursday. You do not have to declare it: it is a free service, hon members. A free service. No declaration necessary. [Interjections.]

† 'n AGBARE LID: Okay, ek sien jou kak. [Tussenwerpsels.]

[An HON MEMBER: Okay, I see your shit. [Interjections.]]

An HON MEMBER: Ja, they probably will not even go there ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Hon members, there are closer venues. In Drakenstein there are 10, I think 12 total facilities in the City of Cape Town.

The venues are available online: [westerncape.gov.za](http://westerncape.gov.za). But I will make a special arrangement and I will WhatsApp it to the hon members so they can further distribute it to their constituencies because any car that is safe on the road, is safer for all of us. Thank you.

Hon members, we are ready for Easter, doing everything possible to keep our residents and visitors safe on the roads during this busy holiday period. Our provincial traffic teams are out in full force with high visibility patrols targeting moving violations, interprovincial corridor operations, roadblocks focused on exodus traffic and fatigue management interventions. Our road safety officers are deployed across the province working with partners to raise awareness about how to save lives whilst travelling.

Just yesterday, hon members, we partnered with PRASA in Kayamandi where rail testing will commence soon, reminding residents of the dangers of railway crossings and of crossing the trainlines, sorry. And I want to thank here our partner, Mr Raymond Maseko, who is here with us today. Thank you, Raymond, PRASA's General Manager in the Western Cape, for all your hard work in trying to restore rail services.

In planning for this Easter, we looked at the lessons learnt during the December festive season to see how we could do things differently and enhance our efforts to prevent traffic crashes and fatalities. With operational deployments all informed by data analytics and boosted by advanced systems and technology, we are targeting pedestrian safety, driver and vehicle fitness, and

ensuring that interventions respond to local challenges.

Hon members, our enforcement during this period will focus on inconsiderate driver behaviour, speeding, drunk driving, passenger overloading in all types of vehicles, unroadworthy vehicles and fatigue. We are prioritising systematic vehicle inspections of busses, trucks, and light delivery vehicles which have been involved in many fatal crashes over the last month. However, hon members, no matter how intensive our road safety campaign might be, we still face enormous challenges in changing road user behaviour.

This past week, we have already seen multiple fatal crashes where the alleged cause was inconsiderate driving or moving violations such as speeding or ignoring traffic signs or road rules. My deepest condolences go out to those who have lost their loved ones in these tragic incidents. We need a collective effort to reduce the number of people losing their lives on our roads, not just from enforcement agencies and road safety practitioners, but from us as a society at large. Our traffic officers work hard 24 hours of the day, often sacrificing precious time with their families. This is why I urge everyone whether they are travelling long or short distances, to support us in our drive to reduce road fatalities in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, I also urge hon members of this House, whether they might be travelling this coming weekend, to be road safety ambassadors and make this a priority conversation around the dinner table. Let us make this Easter holiday joyous and safe on our Western Cape roads. Please do our part. We are

committed in doing our very best to protect everyone out there.

Hon Speaker, it is almost a year since the Mobility Department came into operation and I am confident that the team is on track with this ambitious move. I must congratulate and thank our Head of Department, Senior Management, and their teams for working hard to improve Mobility in the last year. It has been a tough time, but thank you, thank you, thank you.

I also want to thank ...[Applause.] I also want to thank the staff in my Ministry who have been working tirelessly to help me to build the Mobility team. A new team to build is not easy and I want to thank all of you who are working with me in the Ministry to improve Mobility. Thank you very much.  
[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Ja, no, excellent!

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Hon Speaker, we recently confirmed the approval of unfreezing 195 positions. We thank the hon Premier for his vision in ensuring the capacity of Mobility and unfreezing those positions. That is how you build Mobility. Thank you, hon Premier Winde.

While there are difficult decisions to be made when the budget is constrained, we are committed to capacitating and equipping our team to take Mobility forward. We have included R1,5-million for training and developing, and R1,4-million for bursaries for our staff.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, I want to come back to the upcoming weekend with a special reminder. Road safety is not just a set of rules. It is a commitment to each and every one, and our all-collective wellbeing. We need to prioritise road safety in everything we do. Not only to protect ourselves and those around us, but to secure a safer future for all in our province.

Finally, hon Speaker, let me reiterate our Mobility commitment to enabling this province to thrive. We are already demonstrating this commitment in action in our mission to create a safe, dignified and fit for purpose transport system which provides transformative access to opportunities for residents in our province. Thanks again to everyone being here today, to all our stakeholders. I know you have businesses to run, but you chose to be here. I appreciate you and thank you very much. I table the Budget Vote for discussion. I thank you.  
[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! Thank you very much, hon Minister. I just want to remind the members in the gallery that you may not participate in the proceedings of the House, and that includes clapping. I recognise the hon Mvimbi.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

Mr L L MVIMBI: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Thank you very much to the hon Minister for the speech that he has presented. I am rising on behalf



of the African National Congress, not to support this budget.

I am not supporting this budget, if you might recall, hon Speaker. For the past five years, I have been opposed to this budget and one of the hon members, when we started in this Administration, asked me what it is that can make me to support this budget. I answered that, hon Minister, I said that if you can put on the budget of that Department, a subsidisation of the taxi industry, maybe I will consider supporting the budget. So now, I have done that for the past five years. I have been asking this Department to please put money for the subsidisation of the taxi industry ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr L L MVIMBI: ...maybe I will consider supporting this budget. So therefore, I am rising not to support this budget. And that is one of the few reasons why I am not supporting this budget.

Hon Speaker, today we need to look at the Provincial Allocated Budget to the Department of Mobility and whether the said allocation has and will serve its purpose and prominently so, in the new vocabulary of the hon Premier and hon Minister, that is to say The Budget that Serves All. But more so, we hope that it is also going to serve the poor.

Last week, South African observed Human Rights Day, a time to reflect on a period where the majority of our citizens were denied fundamental rights and

subjected to oppression by the previous regime. This national day historically tied to the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March 1960, serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made in the struggle for our democracy. Through this commemoration, we are afforded a chance to assess the advancement made in safeguarding and advancing human rights in our nation.

Hon Speaker, we are approaching the Easter weekend which to our community serves as a time for reflection, renewal and coming together as a community to celebrate traditions and values. Many of our communities travel over this period to their respective areas, meaning during this period, the roads get busy with movement right across the province. This period is also marked by an increase in accidents on the roads, emphasising the importance of heighten caution and adherence to road safety measures to ensure the wellbeing of all travellers.

This is critical in that we must ensure, as the ANC envisioned, that there must be accessibility and mobility to connect our people. As we enter this period, it is paramount that the Western Cape Government must make sure that it takes all those more than 100 traffic officers' BMWs which at some stage, were locked up in garages for months, and now, I hope they are going to put all of them on the road. I know there was a certain amount that was still not available for being on the road, I hope now that all of them will be available on the road because those must serve the intended purpose that they are actually meant for.

Hon Speaker, even with the increase in purchases of so many vehicles, we still

find our people being victims to road rage. We extend our condolences to the families that lost their loved ones on the tragic accident that happened on both the N2 and the N1. It is now more crucial to use these vehicles to be allocated across our accident hotspots to ensure safety for our people.

Speaking of connecting our people, we note the recent intervention by the Department in rolling out the job seekers vouchers, which will come very handy to our people. But hon Speaker, it will be remiss of me not to mention how limiting and insufficient these interventions are in addressing the systemic challenges that face our communities because in order to access, it is for certain partners. They must apply for this.

But also, hon Speaker, I have come to realise that the service provider, the transport service provider is the GABS, that is Golden Arrow Bus Services. Why can this opportunity not also be opened to the taxi industry? Why can they not also be the service providers of this thing because I am told it is R35 per voucher. So, why can this not also be extended to the taxi industry? I hope, hon Minister, you will also consider that so that this can also begin to benefit all those that are actually job seekers, but also all those that are actually rendering this public transport service.

As we know that the taxi industry is supporting two thirds. They are actually transporting two thirds of our commuters. So, we must actually look into making sure that we are actually allocating that to them as well.

While the job seekers vouchers may provide temporary relief for some, it fails to address the root cause of unemployment and economic inequality that persists within our society. We cannot overlook the need for comprehensive policies and structural reform that truly empowers our people and creates sustainable opportunities for all.

The job seekers voucher might be limiting to those that have applied or have been called to interviews by companies that have are not participating because in order for a company to access this, they must actually apply. So, we must look into a way that is more flexible and that we actually accommodate more people. We call for the widening of the scope of this voucher as the investment made here must benefit our people equally, to make it more accessible to more people as we are all aware that jobs are not only available from those partners which to date, have not been made. We hope those partners in future are also going to be made public. Making these partners public will also encourage potential beneficiaries to actively apply at these companies.

Hon Speaker, the ANC welcomes the progress made by PRASA on restoring their Central Line, which has been occupied since COVID-19. Also, hon Minister, please take National Government as your partner, not as your competitor. Use them to compliment where you might actually be weak, and you also compliment them where they are actually weak. Do not always see them as actually as your political opponents. In fact, we are actually one government. So, therefore, we do appreciate the intervention that you have actually made.

The reopening of this line has been the biggest bone of contention for intergovernmental dispute. This is due to the City of Cape Town's noncommittal attitude. There must be a clear understanding that the safety of our communities is paramount, and it is also our duty as electorate representatives, to ensure that Government resources are deployed in a manner that serves the best interests of our constituencies.

Hon Speaker, the City of Cape Town has been embroiled in a two-year long dispute with National Government due to their refusal and noncommittal to relocate the people living on the Central Line. And I hope this time, hon Minister, we are also going to sincerely and actively get involved in resolving that impasse and not run away from it because at the end of the day, it is actually a ticking timebomb that might end up dividing our communities unnecessarily on racial grounds.

National Government has made all means necessary to ensure that the Central Line is reopened, but that could not all be smooth without any hurdles as the journey towards a more just and equitable society undoubtedly encountered numerous challenges along the way. The leadership of the City has been the hurdle in this process, which is why you are always hearing hon Dugmore mentioning the name of J P Smith because he, instead of actually being the person who cooperates on this, he has actually been the one who is actually causing problems in this.

After its move to send back to National Treasury the R50-million it had been given by the Housing Development Agency under the National Minister of Human Settlements Kubayi's directive to purchase land that had been identified for the relocation of the 1 254 of the more than 500 shacks to near Langa Station, they returned this money on top of R111-million meant for the informal settlements. I know, hon Minister, you have got your views on this thing, but I think you must find a way of actually resolving this because at some point, I know you refer to it as fiscal dumping. But I think the City should have just done the right thing and accepted the money, and make sure that they are actually putting the money into good use.

Now, PRASA has overcome that particular hurdle. As we speak, PRASA has overcome that particular hurdle and seemingly facing a new situation of the City fining them more than R800 000. They further went on to cause tension between the community citizens that were to be moved on those that they would then be staying close to. So please, this one needs actually strong intervention by the leadership of the province, working with National and again, as with Local Government in the form of the City of Cape Town. Because as I am saying this, if this matter is not being dealt with it is a ticking time bomb that can further divide our communities on racial grounds. And most of the time, these people who are instigating this racial division are not even staying in those communities because at the end of the day, they go and stay in Hout Bay and in Camps Bay safely, while our communities must actually face each other in dealing with this problem.

These acts of leadership make me wonder whose interest the leadership of the City actually represent because if they had the people of Cape Town's interests at heart, they would have come with better proposals to arrest the situation of the people on the railway line. The environment was not service or conducive for living and yet, we have those that still find it amusing by putting all impediments in solving this matter.

Indeed, hon Speaker, the journey towards achieving democracy and upholding human rights in South Africa have not been without its challenges and obstacles. Despite the progress made, there have been numerous hurdles along the way. It is essential to acknowledge these difficulties and continue working tirelessly to overcome them so that the principle of democracy and human rights are upheld for all out citizens.

As we celebrated Human Rights Day the previous week, which we commemorate each year in order to remind South Africans of the sacrifices that came with achieving democracy. As a result of the commemoration, the country has an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in the protection and promotion of human rights.

Hon Speaker, in our reflection over this period, the City of Cape Town has shown none of these values and that they value the human rights of our people which we, as a country, aspire to live in. They have been self-centred, not wanting to make or provide solutions. The DA-led agenda is inhuman and has never had peoples' interests at heart. All of this is done for a hunger to cling

onto power, written in bold in their mission to devolve the powers they have in the Western Cape. Whereas actually, as the Province, we have spent more time dealing with the issue of devolution of powers into this Provincial Government. In fact, the legal bill as we stand now, stands at more than R15,8-million. Instead of actually worrying about those who spent that money, we should have actually used a lot of time and energy to resolve this problem of the Central Line.

Now, hon Speaker, I would like to actually appeal to the Provincial Government and to the hon Minister in particular, we can actually resolve this issue of the Central Line, working together with National Government. The Province has, to this day, not provided concrete plans to arrest the matter of the minibus taxis that have engulfed our people for years. I am glad, hon Minister, that you have even invited the leadership of SANTACO and I hope that then with that, you might at some stage find yourself agreeing with them that one day, we are going as this province, to find some money in the same way you could find money for the Safety Plan, on the same basis that you can find money to fund Golden Arrow Busses, that you can find some money to start a project to subsidise this industry. This industry is actually transporting more than two thirds, more than two thirds of our commuters are actually transported by this industry. Why can we not find it in our hearts and in our minds to try and actually assist this industry?

So, it is in that regard then, hon Minister, that we hope that then when you are actually going to respond, you are actually going to begin to talk to this matter.



And as long as that matter is not resolved on behalf of the ANC, I stand here not to support this budget. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Mvimbi. I recognise hon Little.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I was hoping to hear this afternoon that some sort of provision would have been made for our students, our learners, that are at risk on travelling to schools. We are concerned that neither in this budget nor in the Education Budget, provision is made for extension or the expansion of the transport for learners whose lives are endangered by gangsterism, overloading and illegal transport.

We are appealing to the hon Minister to find some way to place this as a priority on his agenda in the Budget because we see that he has made provision for consultants and professional services to the amount of R238-million. Could he not find it in his heart to make some sort of provision for our students that are at risk. There are so many of these young kids that have lost their lives because of the transport problem. So, hon Speaker, that is my appeal this afternoon for those out there, young children losing their lives, asking the hon Minister to please consider expanding that facility or that service to our students that are at risk. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*[The Deputy Speaker takes the Chair.]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. I now recognise hon

America.

Mr D AMERICA: Thank you. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker and good afternoon. Good afternoon, hon Deputy Speaker and hon colleagues and hon members of the House and guests in the gallery. Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to briefly just reflect on what my good colleague, hon Mvimbi, mentioned in his speech.

I have a lot of time for hon Mvimbi. He has a very constructive partnership in the Committee. He is not a destructive force, and I can, you know, walk a long journey with him. And I was surprised that he did not mention once Blue in his quest to solicit more funding for the taxi industry because the Blue Dot initiative is. And you know, hon Mvimbi, hon Chairperson, sorry, hon Deputy Speaker, I agree with hon Mvimbi. We need to create an environment where we will sort of expand the assistance to various transport operators. But certainly, the hon Minister will respond adequately in terms of why the limitations are there because they are in charge of National Government. [Interjections.]

Nowhere in the country does any ANC government or the National Government ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: The Safety Plan.

Mr D AMERICA: ...provide that kind of assistance that they expect us to

provide ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: They simply ...[Interjection.]

Mr D AMERICA: ...with the limited funding we get from the national department.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: The GG reserves.

Mr D AMERICA: If we get it from them, we will do it, but the hon Minister will respond to that.

And then again, hon Mvimbi was saying that we need to cooperate with the National Government in a way that will foster cooperation and mutual sort of assistance. Now, hon Deputy Speaker, I recall, and I will just mention it, that since 2019, much was said about the Central Line that the Central Line in Cape Town has become a stagnant reminder of broken promises and communities such as Khayelitsha, Langa, Nyanga, and Mitchells Plain have been left in the lurch in a big way. And I can remember when the hon Speaker was still the Chairperson of this Committee, and I cannot remember if the hon Mvimbi went along.

At the beginning of 2020, we went to the Central Line. We met with national transportation officials, we met with PRASA, and we stood on that overhead bridge, and we looked down on the Central Line. Maybe you remember?

Commitments were made there on that day that certain things will be done, and I remember it was stated that by June, the wall will be built. And we know that at that point in time there will not ...[Interjection.] yes, thank you. Hon Deputy Speaker, and we knew by that time that the destruction that subsequently occurred was not there. Had they have acted then, the Central Line would have been sort of up and running a long time already.

So, amongst the many deadlines over time that PRASA once again, gave them a deadline of December 2023, that was at the end of last year, that they would fully reopen the Central Line. Again, like the previous deadlines, it came and it went. Nothing happened really. So, over five years this line has been closed. Little progress had been made to fully open this crucial transportation corridor or rail corridor. Let that sink in, hon colleagues.

In the whole of President Cyril Ramaphosa's term and his various Ministers of Transport, Mbalula and whoever else thereafter, they could not open this crucial railway line. And, you know, it is one of those railway lines that is the most important and it is a high priority line in Cape Town. And because once it is operative, the very people who will use the line will feel the tangible economic benefit that an operational railway line will provide them, and I will explain that.

So, for as long as we were here, we started my term here in 2019, nothing has happened, and we were agitating since then for the restoration of the particular rail corridor. So, hon Deputy Speaker, we invited the Minister of Transport,

Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga, after being appointed as well as officials from her national Department to bring to the Standing Committee on her plans for rail in the Western Cape. And she engaged with them with the view towards improving not only trains, but transport in general in the Western Cape.

By supporting also competent subnational governments like the Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town and then maybe, others in George and in Drakenstein. However, hon Deputy Speaker, nothing came of it. Certainly, nothing came of it. It was just once again, a litany of broken promises and raised expectations, et cetera. So, hon Deputy Speaker, this ANC-led Government.

In Gauteng, Gauteng of all places, became our ally in a sense that they shared the same sentiments with the DA's longstanding advocacy for this crucial reform of the delivery of transportation options to provinces. They shared that with us because they also faced similar challenges. And with an ally like Gauteng on our side, we were hoping that there will be some movement. And then came maverick, Premier Panyaza Lesufi and he simply just did not sort of support that particular, and he did not put it forward as a serious point that needs to be further explored.

So, this Gauteng Government shared with us the same sentiments. Our longstanding advocacy for the crucial reform in the Western Cape and the rest of the country as far as transport is concerned. So, there is a convergence of these two influential provinces, that is us and Gauteng, is the major step in the

right direction towards changing South Africa's Passenger Train Services landscape and going forward. And we hope that the next Administration in Gauteng will be led by the DA who will give quicker and further impetus towards achieving this particular objective.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, furthermore I would like to just also mention, you know, because we should not get lost in our theoretical and sort of political sort of orientation and ideology like the national democratic revolution and whatever else. The point of the matter is that even all of those theoretical orientations various people may have, the Director General of the National Department of Transport as well as that of National Treasury, should have advised that on allowing capable metros and provinces to run rail passenger services would be a good thing. So therefore, they support the devolution of this particular power to capable provinces and metros because it will provide tremendous potential for delivering better services to the very same people that we purport to represent.

So, we hope then, hon Deputy Speaker, that the Minister would demonstrate the political will that aligns with the needs and the aspirations of the people of the Western Cape, rather than the aspirations of the ANC and its employment committee, and its cadre department. So, as we say, hon Deputy Speaker, in terms of the cost benefit analysis of having this particular corridor, you know, restored. It goes without saying that the cost of living crisis that we all and particularly, the mass of our people over the experience, is reaching unacceptable levels and the people cannot continue to spend the majority of

their salaries just to get to work. And if a person living in the central corridor earns a minimum wage, a substantial portion of that wage will be spent on getting to and from work.

So, fixing the Central Line would save our most vulnerable citizens almost R1 400 per month. Now, to assist our commuters in the face of these ever-increasing costs, one of the simplest solutions to combat the cost-of-living crisis has been right under our noses this entire time. Unfortunately, it has been obscured by a lack of capable leadership and lack of empathy for our poor citizens. That lack of empathy emanates from the National Department of Transport and the National ANC Government who stubbornly refuse to recognise that the devolution of powers would greatly assist the very same poor citizens ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: You must come back to the ANC.

Mr D AMERICA: ...in our province and in our country. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You must come back to the ANC. [Laughter]

Mr D AMERICA: Never! So ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: It would not make sense.

Mr D AMERICA: Since the Central Line in Cape Town is closed, commuters

are paying up to four times more for alternative means of transport. Using a taxi could be as high as R1 500 per month. [Interjections.] A Golden Arrow Bus ticket would cost about R900 per month ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: No, but they are subsidised.

Mr D AMERICA: ...whereas a monthly train ticket would cost a mere R175. [Interjections.] That means, hon Deputy Speaker, that if the ANC Government is seriously committed to reopening the Central Line and stop playing politics and shifting blame, ...[Interjections.] they could save our most vulnerable communities R1 325 per month. [Interjections.] That means not having to choose between commuting to work or putting a plate of food on the table.

Now, recognising that and understanding the benefit it would have for the most vulnerable people, is a demonstration of empathy which this Government has and which the ANC Government does not have.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, passenger rail provides the most cost-effective public transportation option. [Interjections.] It is critical to address this urgent demand for dependable and cheap transportation options, especially as the costs of living continue to rise and rise compounded by State capture and an incompetent National Department. [Interjections.]

As the cost of living is spiralling out of control, the National ANC Government seems to have no solution. In fact, they simply do not care. So, hon Deputy



Speaker, once again, the DA in the Western Cape did not sit back. We continued our commitment to advocating for the devolution of passenger rail services in Cape Town. Areas such as Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain no longer have to rely on expensive taxi trips,

An HON MEMBER: No! [Interjections.]

Mr D AMERICA: ...but rather MyCiTi busses are going up and down ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr D AMERICA: ...to these communities ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr D AMERICA: ...offering reliable, affordable bus services. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members!

Mr D AMERICA: Moreover, further investment in the MyCiTi infrastructure creates jobs and opportunities for our people or your people. Our people. [Interjections.] Taking inspiration from the success stories like the GoGeorge that the hon Minister referred to, ...[Interjections.] the DA-run Western Cape is poised to revolutionise public transportation. GoGeorge's remarkable

growth ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

Mr D AMERICA: ...showcases the transformative power of a well-executed transportation system by a capable government. Unlike PRASA, GoGeorge has continued its upward trajectory ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Sit down!

Mr D AMERICA: ...experiencing a remarkable 20% increase in passengers within a single year, while operating 23% more routes. Under the leadership of this DA Government ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Sit down!

Mr D AMERICA: ...and the George Municipality, GoGeorge remains the most affordable transportation option in the Garden Route region. It is time for the ANC to embrace this opportunity. Devolution of rail services to the Western Cape represents an opportunity to realise long overdue promises and provide much need relief to communities in desperate need. The resistance from the ANC-led National Government to devolve rail services is deeply rooted in their fear that the DA would run passenger rail services far better than they ever could. It is time for the ANC to embrace this opportunity ...[Interjections.] and take on the challenge.

Therefore, hon Deputy Speaker, it goes without saying: ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: I have heard that Golden Arrow is run by ...[Interjections.]

Mr D AMERICA: ...devolution is the solution. Viva devolution is the solution! And therefore, the people that will benefit mostly from devolution and the propaganda that is being spread about the Powers Bill and we want to create a *boerestaat* and whatever else, is not that. It is as simple as creating a functioning, capable transportation cheap option that will benefit the very people that will enjoy it. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr D AMERICA: So, hon Deputy Speaker, it is heartening to see that the Department is equipped to deliver mobility that enables. [Interjections.] They are also ensuring that there is a solid policy and strategy framework to guide the team in place. So, as a Committee, we are pleased that the Department is reviewing the Provincial Land Transport Framework ...[Interjections.] which serves as the foundation for all provincial decisions relating to land transport.

This includes public transport, non-motorised transport, freight transport, safety and district and local level integrated transportation planning and implementation. The Provincial Land Transport Framework is the Mobility

tool for achieving spatial transformation and will thus be aligned with the Spatial Development Framework and IDP's integrated development frameworks of local municipalities to assist them in moving local economic development forward.

And the review is a collaborative process involving various stakeholders to make sure that they know where they are going. So, hon Deputy Speaker, the DA in the Western Cape welcomes the Western Cape's Department of Mobility providing free 10-point vehicle inspections by qualified examiners at locations in Cape Town and Drakenstein. And the hon Minister sort of alluded to it and invited all of us to make use of the services.

So, the free 10-point vehicle check includes tyres, brakes, lighting, suspension, tuning of CV joints, electrical systems, exhausts, wipers, licence discs and much more. The goal is not punitive. It is to assist in identifying any issues before motorists embark on long distance travel or even local travellers, as the hon Minister mentioned. It is part of the Department's proactive approach to heightening awareness and ensuring that safer roads for all travellers during this upcoming long weekend.

Driver behaviour and vehicle fitness are two crucial elements in ensuring road safety. As we are heading towards the Easter weekend, many will be heading out to visit friends and loved ones, or on a well-deserved vacation. While this may be a beautiful, blessed, spiritual time, the roads can become unpredictable and taking the necessary precautions to ensure that you get to your destination

safely and also, back home safely.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, we urge motorists and the Western Cape Government respectively, to use this opportunity to ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy and to continue in its efforts in enforcing regulations and penalising violators, thus ensuring the safety ...[Interjections.] of our residence during their travels over the long weekend. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: It is anyhow too expensive. Secondly, you are actually ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

Mr D AMERICA: And that remains our top priority. And continued vigilance and enforcement are paramount in achieving this goal. And I repeat, hon Marran, because I see you did not note, you did not listen to what I was saying. [Interjections.] To ensuring the safety of our residents during their travels over the long weekend remains a top priority and continued vigilance and enforcement are paramount in achieving that goal. And it is all of our responsibilities to ensure that we achieve that objective, and it is not the traffic officers' responsibility, it is not the hon Minister's responsibility, it is not the hon Premier's, it is all of our responsibilities.

And we need to go out and preach the responsibility to our friends and family that they, too, have a responsibility to ensure that proper driver behaviour is

displayed on the road. We are courteous to other road users, and we obey the rules, and we obey the instructions of our law enforcement officers on the road. And only then we create an ecosystem where we can all feel safe and achieve the goals of reaching our destinations and coming back safely.

So therefore, the DA in the Western Cape wish all our citizens ...[Interjections.] a safe Easter break †en agb Speaker, die Demokratiese Alliansie ondersteun [Tussenwerpsels.] [and hon Speaker, the Democratic Alliance supports [Interjections.]]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

†Mnr D AMERICA: ...die Begroting en wens die agb Minister en die Departement alles sukses toe met die implimentering daarvan en ons glo dat die Department nog vele hoogtes sal bereik, en, agb Minister, ek wil weer baie dankie sê, ons het 'n baie goeie verhouding. [Tussenwerpsels.] Jy het altyd vir my in die binnebaan gehou van dinge wat gebeur.. [Lag.]

[Mr D AMERICA: ...the Budget and I wish the hon Minister and the Department all success with the implementation of it, and we believe the Department will still reach many heights, and hon Minister, I want to say thank you again, we have a very good relationship. [Interjections.] You have always kept me on the inside track of things happening.. [Laughs]]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

Mr D AMERICA: ...and thank you for your support and hon Mvimbi, you may, you know, in a light way you exercise and banter with me, but I want to thank you also because you always attended Committee meetings, you were always constructive. I have a lot of time for you, but if you are amongst your comrades and then, you know, you become a different hon Mvimbi. [Interjections.] I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon Minister Mackenzie.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, but thank you to my hon colleagues for participating in the debate. I just want to say thank you, hon Little, and welcome to the Western Cape Parliament. I think hon Little obviously did not have the time yet to, so I am going to try to assist her.

Hon Little, we transport 65 000 learners in the Western Cape every single day. We feed nearly 500 000 people in the Western Cape, and we obviously want to do more, and I would like to urge hon Little to ask her colleague, Patricia de Lille, who is a National Cabinet Minister who serves in Cabinet, to ask her to allocate more money for us, to the Western Cape, so we can transport more learners. So, I would appreciate if you can help us in taking that course further. So, thank you for that comment.

Hon Derrick America, thank you very much for your Chairpersonship of the

Committee. I appreciate your work and obviously, wish you well in your retirement. So, thank you very much for being with us and for taking care of the Transport portfolio, similar to hon member Mvimbi.

I need to respond to hon Mvimbi because one of the things, I think the PRASA issue is the most contentious issue in his statement. If I can just say, hon Mvimbi, I can write a book on my personal involvement, just on my personal involvement alone in trying to get the Central Line going. Not the Department, not Government: me, Ricardo Mackenzie, my personal involvement in trying to get the Central Line going. One of the things that I did, I remember phoning the hon Premier of the Western Cape from a meeting ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: I phoned the hon Premier from the Western Cape in his office. [Interjections.] I asked them can you please give us two hours because I need the Chairperson, who is now not there anymore, Leonard Ramatlakane and the CEO was Acting, he is now the permanent CEO, for a meeting to discuss the Central Line. I phoned the Mayor of Cape Town. Within five minutes, they gave me two hours each. A day before the meeting, I got a WhatsApp message. The Chairperson of PRASA cannot make it, the CEO says he cannot go ahead with the meeting. One example. I personally with the current Speaker of Parliament when I was Chairperson of the Standing Committee, I took the whole PRASA Executive to his office, 7 Dorp Street. He went to such an extent, he asked the CEO then, Jackie Gooch, they printed



out all available land in the City of Cape Town. We were there for four hours. I even said to them take this one: it is not appropriate. This is environmental land. This one. That is what we did, I personally did, in getting the Central Line going.

I went to Gauteng. I met with the CEO and his Executive in the Joburg head office, PRASA's head office, telling them gentlemen and ladies, what more do you need from us to get the Central Line going? Nothing. It does not move from their meetings. While I was in Joburg, I even went so far and I joked about it, but I went to the factory, Gibela's factory. I even drove the train there. I said I am driving this train to Cape Town. I am so desperate. I personally did those things. You can check the video on my TikTok. I drove that train because I wanted to get the lines going. I personally went to meet with the CEO and with every morning, hon Mvimbi, you take out your phone.

You go on Facebook, and you see signal problem in Cape Town, signal problem. I went to the guys, and I said how much is this signal problem. Let me come back to the Cabinet and let us buy the signals, man. That is how desperate I am too because I live next to the railway line, I grew up with trains. I love trains. It is our solution with the minibus taxi industry as a partner to fix Mobility in the Western Cape. I can tell you now that I can stand here for hours telling you what I personally did to get the Central Line going, but *niks! nothing!* You write to the National Minister. They do not even reply to it. ...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI: But something is happening now.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Something is happening now because it is 70 days before an election. They now wake up and say oh, here is an opportunity for them. [Interjections.] I personally. Hon Mvimbi, I can tell you ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: ...I can tell you and we can sit here for the whole night. I can give you a hundred examples of what I did to get the Central Line going. [Interjections.] And then, your ANC arrived, the National Government arrived one morning ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: ...they identified a piece of land next to a highway where there is no water and electricity, where there is not a police station, where there is no school, there is no clinic, ...[Interjections.] there is nothing next to Stock Road and they are expecting us to go and say yes, do it ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Do not lie when you speak in the House!

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: ...when there is nothing. ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: When I go to Mitchells Plain, I stand there ...[Interjections.] and I look at that piece of land and I look at the new housing that is just there. That is just there. I look at that and I think, but how do you just put people there and you expect everyone living around there ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: ...just to be happy. [Interjections.] You expect the whole community around that piece of land, including people from Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Phillipi there. Phillipi, that side, you know where that band is ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Address me, address me, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: People who have been on the waiting list for 30 years. [Interjections.] They just expect everybody to say ah, Kumbaya. It does not work like that. It does not work like that. The community was not consulted around there. The people's community leaders. I will get to your point about you saying the people do not stay there. I will name those who do not stay there. People who live in that area, the community. You know, a community leader was killed there, Loyiso Nkohla was killed. You know him

very well. He was killed there! A man is lost about the Central Line ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, address me, please.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: A man has lost his life. [Interjections.] He lost his life in that community for helping to resolve the problem. [Interjections.]

But the ANC National Government does not learn from that experience. They do not learn that a man that they appointed to fix a problem was killed there in broad daylight. Instead of learning from that experience, they go ahead and just push another community there. The risks there! And let me tell you about the other people. So, you get all these, and you watch, ...[Interjections.] and you are probably referring to the TikTok videos. The individuals there that are going in that community causing a divisive. I mean, you have seen the videos. I do not have to name them in Parliament. Divisiveness they are spreading between those two communities. It is heartbreaking and you have rightfully raised it. It is causing racial tensions. And those individuals, if you go to their Facebook, you can see whose party they belong to. I do not have to tell them. So let me ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please address me.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Sorry, hon Deputy Speaker, by you.

[Interjections.] And those people do not stay in Camps Bay, hon Mvimbi, they stay in those communities. They do not stay in where you said Camps Bay. They do not stay there. They stay in and around those communities, causing division. The solution to that problem could have been solved years ago, but then you have the National. You are talking about operating in good faith. Everything we do with National Government, hon Deputy Speaker, has been in good faith. I can publish a book about the amounts of letters I wrote, not even with the acknowledgement of receipt. Emails go there to die. If you want to send an email to your funeral, send it to National Government. They do not respond.

Mr L L MVIMBI: Taxi subsidy, taxi subsidy.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: We are coming to that, I am coming to that. So, the issue of the Central Line could have been resolved, hon Mvimbi, if our colleagues here did what we do. Write to their colleagues: come and help us resolve the problem.

And the City of Cape Town, hon Mvimbi said, they should have spent the money. I do not know where hon Mvimbi and mainly just said it out because, you know, in jest, but there is not a government in this world. You wake up with R50-million in your bank account and you decide to spend it. That is not how government works. There is a plan. You submit it to Treasury; you give them a detailed line item. This is for this, this is for this, and then, you get approval and then you spend the money.

So, the City did a good, honest thing, like the City of Cape Town does and I am proud of my colleagues. I heard shouting: J P Smith. He has got nothing to do with the Central Line. Absolutely nothing! [Interjections.] The only thing he is trying to do is to restore a bit of law enforcement which if PRASA did three years ago, [Interjections.] none of us would sit with this problem. [Interjections.] None of us would sit with this problem if PRASA took care of their assets. Years later, we are now trying to fix the problem that they created. All of them: loadshedding, policing, all of them which we are trying to fix. Problems they created we are trying to fix it.

That is the genesis of the Central Line, and I can honestly, if I can sit, I can literally talk for hours on the Central Line because everything this Government has been doing has been trying to solve that problem. Solve the Central Line's problem because there are a million people living between Cape Town and Kapteinsklip on that line who deserve decent, cheap transport on their way to work every morning. It is unacceptable to see people sitting for an hour and a half in traffic from Jakes Gerwel. It is heartbreaking to see somebody starting at eight and they must leave at five. It is not normal when you have a train line there that should be working. It is not normal! The Central Line is personal because I spent hours and hours working with National Government in giving them a solution, but they are not even replying to your emails. I personally!

One important point that I must make. This talking about the HDA and their

land. When I was appointed to my new office, I found out the HDA offices were there. I walked to their office. I brought, in fact, there is a picture on my Facebook page which one of my colleagues took from behind. I showed them the map of Mitchells Plain because they did not know where Mitchells Plain is, I think, the full map. I showed them the map of Macassar. Not even Macassar, it is Makhaza. Somebody in Joburg got confused between Makhaza and Macassar. I showed them the map of Makhaza. I showed them the land opportunities there to fix this problem. † *Niks!* [Nothing! ] I can talk for hours on this, but I am not going to waste people's time.

Hon members, coming to the minibus taxi industry. You know, you are speaking with partners here and one of the things I always say: the minibus taxi is not going anywhere, and they should not go anywhere. They are here to stay. [Interjections.] They are our partners in fixing mobility in the Western Cape.

Hon Mvimbi, when I was appointed, I had and in fact, with many people I had a one-on-one with the hon Premier and he was talking about the vision, you know, the future of Mobility. And one of his visions is that the minibus taxi industry, for example, should be partners in the rail system. So, if we devolve rail, why cannot SANTACO own a portion of this, a piece of this pie, a portion of this pie? Because there is an integrated mode, but we are waiting.

The devolution strategy, which they did not published by the way, which they were supposed to publish. We are now four days from the end of March. It is

not Easter on Thursday, but on Friday. They have not published the devolution strategy. They are supposed to publish it by National Government. You ask in the meetings where it is? Tickets. No one answers. The Director General, to his credit as a top Government official said we are going to publish it. The National Minister probably gave him a †*klap* [slap] and said do not publish it. It is not yet published. They promised to publish it so we can give input into that strategy. Nothing! [Interjections.] You cannot work with partners who operate in bad faith.

So, the minibus taxi industry should be a partner in this, hon members. ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: They should be a partner and they must be a partner. [Interjections.] They know the routes. They grew up in the routes. They know what the efficiency is for getting people to Kapteinsklip so they would be able to influence their schedule and say no, do not put that taxi from Tafelsig or do not put a taxi from Westridge, ...[Interjections.] take one from Tafelsig. They should be partners in that. But when the devolution strategy is sitting somewhere in head office, nothing has happened.

And on the hon member Mvimbi and you probably know, or I have said it when I was a Chair of the Standing Committee, we are a one hundred percent believer of that. I believe in it. In fact, the former Minister, I think it was Abdullah



Omar, of which one of your branches is named after him, talked about it. He talked about it in 1996. There is a whole document, a thick document, laying and gathering dust in Pretoria. We talked about the minibus. There was the first taxi lekgotla, I think they had in 1996. Then, there was another one. And then, Minister Mbalula was appointed. Then, they had another lekgotla. Then, the President came to speak.

They all talk about it, but no one gives the money. Instead, they just take money. We have got another billion rand that was taken in here from us that my colleague spoke about in depth yesterday, so I am not going to talk about. They just come and take money. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: The voucher?

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: We do not have trees in the Western Cape. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: The voucher?

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: Money does not grow on trees. We want to. I wish we could generate more of our own funding, but we just cannot keep on plugging the holes National Government keeps on creating for us. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: The voucher?

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: The voucher we are doing, I appreciate your input in that and pushing it further. Of course, one needs to look at a pilot project. Of course, one wants to extend it. You know, I would like to drive a Ferrari, but the fact is, I cannot afford it. That is the reality. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Involve the taxis. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: We want to involve as many partners as we can; we want to involve many partners. And should it prove successful, and we can find the money, I will certainly advocate that we spend it as far as possible to ensure that all our partners benefit.

If I can just say, hon Mvimbi, so on the Central Line, like I said, I can talk about that for hours but there is nothing new that you have said because everything you know is happening. On the Safety Plan, I think ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: ...on road safety, we will continue to use them. Our provincial traffic officers are using those BMWs, hon Mvimbi. That is how we catch these criminals. They are high performance vehicles. They are working very well in our province. You must have seen one of two of them on our roads, working to make our roads ...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI: I have seen a lot, I have seen a lot.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mvimbi, please do not speak to the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF MOBILITY: You have seen the lot. That means they are working. If you have seen them my colleague, that means they are working. So, we will certainly appreciate that and on that, I cannot remember if I have missed anything out. I will raise it again with you. [Interjections.]

But definitely, on the devolution of power we do want it. We are a functional government, and we want any single power that can make this country better. And giving us the rail, giving us the trains is the right thing to do and it should be done. And I thank you, sir. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. That concludes the debate on this Vote. The House will now be suspended for two minutes to allow hon Minister Mackenzie's officials and guests to leave the chambers.

*[Business of House paused for clearing of bays]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you everybody, please take a seat. Hon members, just to say that we will push through all the way to the end today, as we have a full day tomorrow. So, the last two Votes for the day will continue. I will now ask Mr Stemele to read the Eighth Order, or the Seventh Order of

the Day.

†The SECRETARY: Umhlonhlophiksano umvoti wesixhenxe yohlalo lubomali losebelo uphuhliso lobuntu. [The controversial voter 6 of this section of the budget is the budget for human development.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Stemele, I now recognise the Hon Minister Fernandez.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Premier and hon Cabinet colleagues, hon members of the Provincial Legislature in the House and on the virtual platform, members of the media and public, citizens of the Western Cape and the DSD leadership team present here today. It is good evening, †goeienaand, molweni nonke [greetings to all], salaam alaikum.

I rise to table the Appropriation Bill for the Department of Social Development Vote 7 for the 2024/2025 financial year. It has certainly been no easy feat to get to this point in the budget process. At a time of fiscal uncertainty and a higher demand for services than ever before, but the Department's leadership have braved the storm taking the little we have to work with to ensure we continue helping the most vulnerable in our society and fulfil all statutory obligations. For that, I say thank you to the entire management team for your unwavering commitment in balancing that budget to the people of this province.

The Department has received a budget allocation of R2,539-billion for the 2024/2025 financial year. Thereafter, it is expected to increase to R2,635-billion in the 2025/2026 financial year and R2,719-billion in the 2026/2027 financial year. The current economic climate is grim as the global economic outlook persists on a negative trajectory. Locally, low revenue generation, massive debt servicing costs by the National Government, domestic risks like the energy crisis and increased service delivery demands have greatly affected the Provincial Budget.

It is also no secret that the absorption of the cost of the nationally negotiated Public Sector Wage Agreement dealt the Department and many other departments within the Western Cape Government and across the country, a huge blow. Within our already constrained allocation, this 4,7% wage increase to public servants has to be accommodated within the Department's baseline budget. This has necessitated extremely difficult conversation with DSD's NPOs and NGO partners, warning them of what the constrained fiscal environment will mean for them.

National Government's failure to get Eskom back on track has also not done us any favours. With loadshedding hampering economic growth across sectors, this has placed further burdens on NGO and NPOs leading to a greater reliance on the Department for funding. An example of this: to keep generators running at some of our facilities when loadshedding happens.

While these are certainly difficult and unprecedented times, hon Deputy Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to highlight the support from Provincial Treasury with its additional allocation of R25-million in the 2024/2025 year, and R25-million in the 2025/2026 financial year, to alleviate service pressures emanating from baseline reductions. National Treasury has also allocated an additional R50-million per year over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period to alleviate the compensation of employees' pressures.

This funding will sustain the baseline funding for organisations within the Child Protection Services space, ensuring the Department upholds its statutory obligations. The additional funding will enable the Department to provide R6,5-million in 2024/2025 for the expansion of a homeless shelter in Cape Town in partnership with the City of Cape Town. The Sanitary Dignity Project will be able to continue with an allocation of R11,9-million in 2024/2025, R12,4-million in 2025/2026 and R12,9-million in the 2026/2027 financial year.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in the tabling of the budget a few weeks ago, hon Minister Wenger said over 75% of the Provincial Budget over the MTEF is being spent to champion the needs of the poor and most vulnerable residents in this province. This rings especially true for our Department. The continuation of the Sanitary Dignity Project will see 385 schools being reached, supporting approximately 150 000 indigent girls across the province. This is an additional 20 schools and 20 000 girls being supported, compared to the previous financial year. The support of schools in rural areas like farms, will be greater where rural coverage is at 65% and the metro coverage is at 35%.

I mentioned the departments had to make difficult decisions with the limited funds available, while keeping those most in need top of mind. Sadly, a R10-million reduction in the budget for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme forces the Department to focus on its community nutritional support to the Community Nutrition and Development Centres, otherwise known as CNDCs.

The House must note though that poverty relief is not a core mandate of this Department, but rather that of the South African Social Security Agency. Despite this not being our responsibility, we recognise that where National Government fails, Provincial Government needs to step in, despite limited financial resources. A large number of kitchens will be closed, and the programme will only retain those in strategic areas such as the rural areas, and this is based on situational analysis, need assessments and data like the Central Karoo and Kannaland where poverty is rife.

The R2,5-million reduction for the Youth Development Programmes for 2024/2025 means fewer participants and interns at the Youth Cafés are going to be funded, meaning fewer will be able to access these services. From the current 10 000 youth participants and 105 interns, these numbers will drop to 8 000 youth and 55 interns respectively. Thankfully, all the Youth Cafés in the province will continue to be funded, but without an inflation adjusted allocation.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this year, the Western Cape Government once again

showed it cares for those living in abject poverty. When certain parts of the Karoo were hit by a prolonged power outage due to a freak storm, this Department within a matter of days, was able to procure 5 000 food parcels worth R3-million through an emergency procurement process. It is important to note again that Disaster Relief is not this Department's core mandate, but the responsibility of nationally led SASSA. We stepped in because we saw the urgent need for help for thousands of vulnerable citizens in a remote area.

These food parcels, along with several dozen more that were in the DSD storage facility, were delivered and distributed to indigent households in different parts of the Central Karoo. This included Matjiesfontein, Laingsburg, Prince Albert, Merweville, Leeu-Gamka, and Swartberg. The food parcels also benefitted over 17 000 people. This Emergency Food Relief Programme was thanks not only to the hard work of DSD staff who worked night and day to conduct assessments and conduct the distribution with the assistance of many stakeholders like local municipalities, the Department of Local Government, the South African Police Service, NGOs, corporates and many active citizens. I can say this, hon Deputy Speaker, because I was on the ground engaging with the food trucks as they arrived, to ensure that every single vulnerable household received a food parcel or two, as it was required.

The mission highlighted the importance of collaboration in ensuring the most vulnerable citizens are cared for. As Government, we can only do so much, especially now in an age of budget cuts and fiscal constraints, but when we work together with dedicated partners towards a common goal, we can achieve



great things.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I mentioned earlier the uncomfortable conversations that have needed to take place within the Department, in the NPOs and the NGO sectors. We are under siege. We are receiving correspondence daily from NGOs and NPOs. We are regarding the budget cuts, and we also acknowledge that it has been an uphill battle for these organisations to stay afloat since the COVID-19 pandemic hit South Africa, and this dismal economic climate persists. With COVID-19 we saw donor funding reducing, international funding being reduced, and a greater reliance on DSD. And sadly now, we get to this situation where we face a fiscal cliff, and the dismal economic climate persists.

Funding has had to be reduced for the Older Persons Programme, impacting 160 service centres with at least one organisation stating it will have to close its assisted living home due to this reduction. The Department will, however, continue focusing on protecting the elderly from abuse and harm. The monitoring and registration of residential facilities for older persons will continue to be prioritised to ensure that vulnerable and frail older persons receive care and services to the prescribed norms and standards.

Fortunately, the fiscal constraints have not had a major impact on the Children and Families Programme. We have been able to continue funding organisations and social worker posts in this programme. NPOs in the Restorative Services Programme received fewer cuts than initially expected. Court ordered

statutory services were protected, while Child and Youth Care Centres and Substance Abuse Treatment Centres that deal with court ordered services, received increases. Diversion programmes within the Crime Prevention Programme were also prioritised with limited funding cuts taking place.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I am concerned at the impact of funding cuts to NGOs and NPOs on service delivery. It will certainly have a knock-on effect on the already overburdened DSD social service professionals. Not only our social workers, social auxiliary workers, probation office, in fact, everyone in the value chain within DSD is feeling the impact of the increased need for services and the demands that are being placed on these workers every single day.

That is why I am encouraged by the innovation in the Department in collaboration with the Department of the Premier. It is showing in its implementation of an electronic system that will improve accountability and provide data to track the impact of interventions in the child protection space. We are hopeful these systems will reduce the heavy administrative burden on staff and improve reporting tools. Many might not know, but social workers do have to craft reports which need to be provided to magistrates and in the situation where they are constantly out in the field, the report writing then seems to be at the backend. So, hopefully, this innovation will assist them in this regard.

As the lead Minister for gender-based violence in the province, it remains a priority for me to see interventions in this space strengthened. The GBV

Ambassador Programme where we have trained volunteers who are community members, to help raise awareness about gender-based violence support services and information, has shown great success not only in Delft, but the Swartland area as well.

Since its launch, GBV ambassadors have worked with DSD staff in Delft with awareness campaigns and assisting victims of violence and abuse to get help. From April last year to December, the ambassadors were mostly a walking bus. Men and women have assisted in getting 152 GBV services rendered in Delft. This is a perfect example of how collaborative work between Government and communities can increase and improve service delivery where it is needed most.

The Department is also working on getting GBV ambassador programmes off the ground. In other areas in the province like Witzenberg, Theewaterskloof, Phillipi, Kraaifontein and Prince Albert. And here, I need to say thank to our community liaison officer, Ms Colleen Ryan, who is also our GBV champion on the ground and engaging with these municipalities on a daily basis.

Hon Deputy Speaker, while I am saddened to end my term with a budget speech that is peppered with bad news, I am equally encouraged knowing the Department is in the capable hands of leaders like our HOD, Dr Robert Macdonald. Charles, our Chief Director, Charles Jordan, Annemie van Reenen, Ramula Patel, Mzwandile Hewu, Leana Goosen, our CFO Juan Smith and Gavin Miller who are all sitting in the box there. They and the rest of the management

team have sailed this ship through tumultuous waters, and it is certainly said to become even stormier with further budget cuts possibly on the horizon.

Then, there are the DSD staff members who work tirelessly to serve the vulnerable residents of this Province. I especially wish to highlight the work of the incredible social service professionals as we are ending off Social Work Month, which is celebrated in March. You are the heroes who travers communities across the Western Cape, often at great personal expense and risk to yourself, to ensure the dignity and wellbeing of those most in need is ensured. You are greatly valued and appreciated.

Thank you to the Ministry team for continuously being the wind beneath my wings. The Ministry team led by our Head of Minister, Ms Ananda Nel, who is not only super-efficient, but has managed to keep the team functioning as if we were a family and we call ourselves the A-Team. To our partner NGOs and NPOs, I appreciate and understand the difficult position you are in. I assure you we will continue advocating for you with matters as you are invaluable to ensuring the social fabric of our communities remain intact. Now, more than ever, we need the private sector and corporates to work with us, and to try and help meet you in achieving the ever-increasing demand for social services.

A Whole of Government and a Whole of Society approach is more important now than ever before to address the social ills and create a province we can be proud of. We need willing and active citizens, like the GBV ambassadors in Delft, the NGOs, the NPOs, the private sectors, municipalities, and all other

Government departments who step in to help manage a transversal approach. And a team that I was proud to lead was the Dignity and Wellbeing Workstream that had five Ministers contributing towards taking care of the needs of the most vulnerable.

We will continue to work for the people of this province, unlike the National Government that works only for themselves, showing no integrity, accountability nor true leadership. And this is evidenced by the wage debacle that has left us and all other provinces with a huge dilemma. I wish to thank this august House for the opportunity to table the Appropriation Bill for Vote 7 today. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. I now recognise the hon Bakubaku-Vos.

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS: Thank you. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, esteemed colleagues and guests, today as we convene to discuss and vote on the proposed budget to the Department of Social Development, it is very important that we critically examine its implications, particularly its impact on the most vulnerable members of our society. It is abundantly clear that the proposed budget is not only anti-poor but disregards the urgent needs of those who rely on Social Development Programmes for their survival and wellbeing.

The most pressing challenge that requires Government's full attention is

gender-based violence and femicide. The recent tragic incidents of young girls being brutally murdered in our province is a cause for serious concern and shines the spotlight on the urgent need of effective intervention to address this pandemic.

My thoughts and prayers are with families of the 17-year-old girl from Gugulethu whose body was found in Kuils River. The 11-year-old girl whose body was discovered in a canal near her informal settlement home in Eerste River last month, as well as the family of 22-year-old Asiphe Cetywayo who was raped and murdered in Mbekweni in Drakenstein. And her body was poured over with acid before being dumped near a lake in the area.

These are not isolated incidents. Crime statistics reveal that between 2019 and 2023, sexual offences increased by 3,5% in the province. This means since hon Premier Winde came into office, he and the hon MEC Fernandez have failed to curb the challenge of sexual offences. His Safety Plan has failed to make women feel safe in the Western Cape. The budget we are asked to pass today will fail women and young girls even more. The budget proves that the DA does not care about the Pride victims of GBV. If it cared, it would do everything in its power to prevent cuts to the Victim Empowerment Programme and reducing resources for psychosocial support services for survivors of GBV.

The budget allocation for subprogramme 4.3, Victim Employment, is decreased from R73,4-million to just over R72-million. As per the Department's Annual Performance Plan, these funds will be spent to provide 18 620 of gender-based

violence, while every day, each and every hour or every minute, women get raped. There is a woman who got murdered! Hon Deputy Speaker, as the Department's annual performance plan, these funds will be spent. There is less money in this gender-based violence to access psychosocial support services, as well as 1 850 victims of crime and violence to access services in funded Victim Empowerment Programme shelters.

It is precisely because of this low budget and low target setting that only 105 7091 victims of gender-based violence access psychosocial support services since 2019/2020 and only 7 791 victims of crime and violence accessed this. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Victim Empowerment Programme shelter service over the same period. This is simply not enough. It is a drop in the ocean when compared to the number of victims in need of support. Without sufficient funding, even the recently launched initiatives such as the GBV forum, GBV helpdesk and GBV ambassadors, nor the launch will not assist. †Speaker, ukusukela ngomhla wokqala umphathiswa uFernandez wangena esihlalweni oko sa mamela ukuba ugulumende wephondo kwakunye nelisebe mabanyuse imali ebekele ukulwa nokuhlukunyezwa kwa basechini. Kudala simemelela ukuba makathethe nenkulumbuso kwakunye nomphathisa wezimali apha ephondwenikuze ba bone ukuba banga inuysa njanlenconco. Kude kwaba lelithuba lokuba iqesha lakhe kwesikhundla lifikelele esphelweniingakhange iyenzeka. Yinto ke le ebonisa mhlophe ukuba kulo gulumende weDA umcelingeni wokuhlukunyezwa kwamanina akawu khathaleli and engawu thathelanga ngalelo futhi awumqhalabisi. Unkulumbuso Winnie usibonisile shlandlo ngeshlandlo ukuba eliphondo liyakwazi ukuyizama imali qalifuna

ukusombulula imiyengindeli eli jongene nalo, umzekelo yisafety plan kwakunye nezinye izigidi bezisetsenziselwa uku phelisa usemiki wombani esi jongene nawo. Andizibali ezinto ukuba ndiceka ezizinto kodwa ndizama nje ukubonisa ukuba ukuhlukunyezwa kwamanina akumqalabisi at all uPremier nogulumende wakhe. Speaker kubhlongu ukuba umzali ubukele Ikamva lentombi okanye unyana wako litshabalala ngexa yeziyobisi. Imali yengabu zika gulumende zokulwa nalo mcelingeni nayo ihlisiwe koluhlahlo lwabuyimali, into rbonisa ukuba ugulumende wephondo akavakalelwa yilentlungu iviwa ngabazali. [Speaker from the first day minister Fernandez came in charge we have been waiting on the provincial government and the department to raise money to fight harassment of women abuse, we have long called him to speak to the prime minister and the finance manager here in the province and see if they can increase the amount of money, it has come to a conclusion that his time came to an end without it happening. It is clear that in this group of DA the issue of maternal abuse is ignored and has not been addressed and it does not shake him. The Prime Minister Winnie has shown us on occasion that the province is able to provide money and seek to resolve the debts it faces, for example the security plan and millions of other measures being taken to end the debt of electricity we facing. I don't count these things to make fun of them but I am trying to show that the abuse of women doesn't bother the Premier and the government. It is sad for a parent to watch your daughter or son's future perish because of drugs. The government anti-money laundering funds have also been lowered from the budget. An indication that the provincial government does not feel this pain felt by parents.]



The budget for the subprogramme 4.4, Substance Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation, has been decreased from R105,8-million to R99-million. This is deeply troubling. Substance use disorder is a persistent issue that affects individuals and communities across our province. By cutting expenditure in this critical area, means that the DA Government is abandoning those who are most in need of assistance from perpetuation in circles of addiction and despair.

The overview of provincial revenue and expenditure as well as the Annual Performance Plan outline the plans of the Department for the coming year, including the proposing of the Kensington Treatment Centre into a substance abuse treatment centre for youth. In addition to this, there will be increased focus on registration of treatment centres. These plans will not yield any positive results if the budget for the programme keeps on decreasing.

The next time hon MEC Allen or the hon Premier think of shifting the blame to the South African Police Services to the problem of drugs and substance use disorder, they must do so knowing that it is this DA-led Government that is the cause of the problem by cutting its expenditure of substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation. †Somlom. [Speaker], It is the same DA Government that has been very sure in the implementation of the National Drug Master Plan for the province. They are very slow when it comes to that, †Somlomo [Speaker], which has resulted in a number of municipalities not to have the much important Local Drug Action Committees to coordinate municipalities' fights against drugs and substance abuse.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the proposed budget also fails to adequately support our elderly population and persons with disabilities. The DA is neglecting the basic rights and dignity of the most vulnerable people in the society. It is unreasonable to prioritise fiscal austerity over the wellbeing of our elderly citizens and persons with disabilities. The budget for subprogramme 2.2, Service to Older Persons, has been revised downwards from R247,7-million to just over R230-million. As a result of this, the number of subsidised beds in the residential care facilities for older persons will be decreased, as well as the number of subsidised beds in assisted and independent living facilities for older person.

While the budget for subprogramme 2.3, Services to the Persons with Disabilities, has been increased, the Department is however revising down its targets. The number of subsidised beds in funded NPO residential care facilities for persons with disabilities is decreased. The same is happening with the Social Relief Programmes. While the budget has been increased, the Department is lowering its target. For instance, the target for the number of boxes of sanitary packs despatched to identified schools and facilities, has been decreased. Indigent women and girls in poor schools and TVET colleges will be negatively affected by this.

Hon Deputy Speaker, all what remains is a serious challenge in our province. The proposed cut to poverty alleviation programmes will have devastating consequences for those who are already struggling to make ends meet. The number of vulnerable people in our communities rely on Government support

has increased. Persons under the food poverty line, R663 per person per month, increased by 7,1% to R2,545-million between 2013 and 2022. In the face of rising poverty and the cost of living, the Department lowered down the numbers of people receiving meals to just over 9 600 since 2023/2024 and it will remain so for each year over the 2024 MTEF period. The Department has also made it clear that while the number of persons that will receive meals remain unchanged, the frequency of weekly meals will, however, be reduced. This is because the Department has reduced the budget allocation for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods from R64,6-million to R54,4-million.

In contrast to the callous indifference displayed by this DA Government, the caring ANC Government is committed to tackling poverty and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable. In its Manifesto, the ANC promised to tackle poverty and the high cost of living by providing a comprehensive social security and basic service and addressing the impact of rising prices on households. Proposed interventions include ensuring the national minimum wage increases inline with inflation and so, compliance; lowering the cost of food through VAT exemption on essential items; supporting food security through land reform; support for communities and home gardens and acting against price fixing. Progressively implementing a basic income support grant by extending and improving the value and coverage of the Social Relief of Distress Grant for the unemployed.

The DA do not agree with the SRP Grant to an extent that its overview of provincial revenue and expenditure, it has highlighted its extension as a key

risk to the national and fiscal outlook. ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Bakubaku-Vos, please finish off. Your time is up.

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS: Can I conclude it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yep. You literally have about 10 seconds.

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS: In conclusion, it is our moral imperative to stand up and speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. It is on behalf of the elderly and people with disabilities that I reject this proposed budget because it is going to fail them ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Bakubaku-Vos. I now recognise the hon Little.

Ms S LITTLE: Was someone else before me? Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Ms S LITTLE: The hon MEC has emphasised that 75% of the Western Cape budget will be spent on championing the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable residents over the next three years. Yet, the Social Development Budget represented to this House, does not reflect this. The needs and demands of the poor and vulnerable in this province are being paid lip service to. This budget does not address specifically the growing number of individuals living on our streets.

The Department has gone so far as to allocate a budget that was approved two years ago and adjusted last year, for the specific purpose of opening this Administration's first facility for those living on the streets. An amount of R4-million was set aside for the new shelter in Cape Town's CDB, the first for this Admin. A year ago, the same budget was adjusted threefold when the project was moved to Woodstock. At the end of last year, that budget was at R80-million and was allocated to a service provider that has proved not to contribute to the reduction of people living on the street.

This Department reported that 674 adults and 41 children living on the streets of Cape Town to the National Government last year. According to two independent, credible counts, we have just over 7 000 individuals living on the streets of Cape Town. How can this budget be considered to be catering for the most vulnerable when we have not even taken the trouble to find out who we have and who we are offering these services to. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Little. I now recognise hon Marais. Is he online? Hon Marais. No. Okay, thank you for letting me know. I now want to acknowledge that it will be the hon Poole's maiden speech. So, welcome, hon Poole.

Mr C POOLE: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon members and esteemed guests in both the gallery and the virtual platform. I think they have already left. We must recognise that the Government is measured not by its wealth, but by how it treats its most vulnerable people. It is the widows, the marginalised, disadvantaged and forgotten that the true test of our humanity lies. Their struggles, their dreams and their hopes must be at the forefront of our deliberations. For it is our duty, our moral imperative as elected public representatives to ensure that they are not left behind.

Additionally, the recent closure of another 235 Post Offices will only add to the struggles of grant beneficiaries. These closures will decrease the numbers of places where grant recipients can retrieve their grant money and will force them to travel long distances, spending about 30% of their grant money on just taxi fares to collect their money.

The DA will continue to hold incompetent ANC Ministers to account. As we fight for the improvement of the lives of all residents, no one deserves to go hungry because the National Government cannot perform simple functions such as getting grants to beneficiaries on time. Mudslinging does nothing to fix the problems of social grant beneficiaries who are expected to carry the burden of

payment system failures. The Department of Social Development in South African Social Security Agencies are gambling with the livelihoods of our most vulnerable residents. Under the watch of the ANC National Government, unemployment has skyrocketed almost to 60%. Crime has been the highest it has ever been and loadshedding has become a daily occurrence with Eskom only regressing.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government has allocated a massive R7,893-billion to the Department of Social Development over the 2024/2025 MTEF. This increase will go a long way in bettering the lives of our vulnerable residents in the province. We must place a particular emphasis on protecting our older residents and those living with disabilities. These individuals have contributed to the fabric of our society and deserve to age with dignity and praise, while receiving the support they need. Similarly, for residents living with disabilities. It entails providing adequate resources for accessibility, employment opportunities and tailored support services that enable them to live independent, full, living lives.

In order to protect the province's older residents and residents with disabilities, the Provincial Department of Social Development has allocated R3,6-billion to social welfare services over the 2024/2025 MTEF. What does this mean? Over 4 600 beds will be provided in residential care facilities for older persons. Almost 8 500 subsidies will be transferred to community-based care and support services for older person. Of the subsidised beds, 1 600 will be provided to the funded NPO residential care facilities for person with

disabilities and almost 2 200 subsidies will be transferred to protective workshops providing services to person with disabilities.

Despite the heavy cuts the Department takes on a national level, it is also important to prioritise the wellbeing of children and families. Our children are the future of our society and investing in their welfare ensures a brighter tomorrow for all. We must strive to provide robust support systems that enable families to thrive. We must address the root causes of child poverty and instability, ensuring that every child has a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow. By prioritising the needs of children and families, we do not only fulfil our moral obligation to protect the most vulnerable, but also lay the foundation to a more resilient and equitable society.

The Western Cape Department of Social Development has allocated R1,509-billion to safeguard our children and families. From the Family Preservation and Support services, 19 200 will benefit, 3 000 parents and caregivers will complete parent education and training programmes, and 2 200 subsidised beds in funded CICC's in terms of the Childrens Act.

Hon Deputy Speaker, combatting gender-based violence requires a concerted effort from all sectors of society and allocated resources within our Social Development Budget to address this progressive issue is paramount. We must invest in comprehensive intervention programmes that challenge harmful gender norms and promote healthy relationships built on respect and equality. Survivors need to receive the assistance and protection they need to rebuild



their lives. We must send a clear message that such violence will not be tolerated, and the Democratic Alliance reaffirms our commitment to creating a society where everyone can live free from fear and harm.

To this end, 18 620 victims of GBV will be assessed and provided psychosocial support services and 1 850 victims of GBV will gain access to empowerment programme shelters. Hon Deputy Speaker, as substance abuse affects many of our communities in the Western Cape, the DA-run Western Cape Government will spend R350-million of the 2024/2025 MTEF to combat substance abuse, prevent substance abuse and rehabilitate drug users. The scars of substance abuse erode the fabric of communities jeopardises the wellbeing of residents across the Western Cape and it is imperative that resources get allocated effectively.

Over the 2024/2025 MTEF, almost 13 000 users will receive early intervention services for substance use disorder. About 4 000 users will receive aftercare and reintegration services for substance use disorder. At the departmental treatment centres, 360 users will complete inpatient treatment services. Almost 500 subsidised beds will be provided to inpatient treatment centres and 6 000 users will have access to community-based substance use disorder treatment services. R1,659-billion has been allocated to combat both gender-based violence and substance abuse in the province.

Lastly, hon Deputy Speaker, poverty alleviation is an important attempt to foster equitable societies worldwide. While safety nets such as grants offer

immediate relief, the ultimate goal should be to empower individuals to achieve self-sufficiency through meaningful employment. Transitioning people from reliance on grants to active participation in the workforce is paramount for several reasons.

Firstly, gainful employment not only provides individuals with a sense of dignity and a purpose, but also enables them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and economies. Moreover, it forces skills development and enhances social cohesion and breaking the cycle of integral generational poverty. Additionally, a robust workforce bolsters economic growth, thereby creating more opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and reducing the overall demand for welfare assistance.

By prioritising initiatives that facilitate job training, education and access to employment opportunities, societies can uplift individuals, families, and entire communities, laying a solid foundation for a long-term prosperity and social cohesion to this end. Almost 10 000 vulnerable persons will receive meals, 620 EPWP job opportunities will be created, and 8 000 youth will be participating in skills development programmes in 2024/2025.

Hon Deputy Speaker, these are not just numbers. They represent lively [Inaudible] just safeguard it and hope rekindled. They are the embodiment of this DA Government's commitment to betterment, justice and compassion. This Government is making headways in bettering the lives of our residents and will continue doing so. Despite facing immense challenges and persistent

failures at a national level, our Provincial Government has remained steadfast in its dedication to improving the lives of those in need and have not wavered in their resolve to make a tangible difference in the lives of our residents.

Let us acknowledge the tireless efforts of our hon Minister and her dedicated staff members who work tirelessly day in and day out to implement policies and initiatives aimed at providing essential services and support to those who need it most. From expanding access to social assistance, programmes investing in vital community services, our Provincial Government has shown time and again its commitment to putting the needs of our residents first. No matter the cuts. The innovative thinking and the innovative ideas coming up in your Department, put us on a level where we can still render the services our vulnerable people need.

But our work is far from over. Together, let us strive to build a province where every individual, regardless of circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as the Standing Committee and as a member of the DA, I am in support of our Budget Vote 7.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Poole. I now recognise the hon Minister Fernandez.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me

to thank every hon member who participated in the debate. Many are valuable inputs, yet sadly, some misdirected statements were made. However, before I respond I would like to premise my response on the fact that poverty, gender-based violence, substance use disorder, homelessness does not wear a political T-shirt. It cannot be politicised. It is not red, it is not green, it is not orange, it is not blue, and it is in this light that one needs to look at the harsh reality of what is happening in our society.

So, to the hon Bakubaku-Vos who I do not only consider as an hon member of the Opposition, but as a friend. Thank you for your contribution and your passion to this portfolio, and the work that we have done together. Sadly, gender-based violence requires a whole-of-society approach. No government has a silver bullet to solve any specific social economic ill that exists.

So, whilst and I say this, I stand here listening to the comments around the budget that has been cut and as a former banker for 30 years, one would know that you can only cut your cloth according to your grain. If you receive X amount, you can only expend X amount. Other than that, you would run into an overdraft or a deficit. And as it applies to a government department, it would apply to an individual. You cannot spend more than you have.

And it is in this light that the leadership team sitting there have grappled over weekends and late into the night to make trade offs that were, indeed, difficult. Because a trade off on any one of these areas, you are marginalising or you are short or like you indicated, you are saying people are being let down by the

system. But I also want to say, when a woman gets raped or domestic violence happens, it often happens in a home. The police are not there. The teacher is not there. The Government is not there. So, what we need as a society is a behavioural shift around how we treat women and children in our society. And that requires everyone to be involved as an active citizen. It cannot be a Minister, a ministry, or departments.

Similarly with substance use disorder, we are seeing more and more younger children using substances and unfortunately, one needs to reflect on the role of parents. How many active parents do we have? How many absent parents do we have? So, whilst this might not be a political conversation, the need to solve the problem is bigger than a department and unfortunately, the Department now has serious challenges in terms of budget constraints.

But we do have NGO partners in the region who are assisting us with GBV work. We have 26 GBV social workers with another four positions being filled. How grossly inadequate, but it is a start. We, too, are the only province that managed to operationalise our six shelters which Minister De Lille provided to us. So, I do think with 26 shelters we are trying our best to ensure that the most vulnerable, in terms of women and children, are protected.

When you talk about SRD, which is Social Relief of Distress, SASSA has failed dismally, and I am not going to mince my words here. SASSA is tasked with delivering social relief of distress. When they introduced the R350 SRD grant, food parcels were taken away. I once had a man call me. He was sitting in a

taxi. He had been drinking sugar water for four days. He was waiting on his SRD grant to be paid. We saw what happened when 13-million people applied, and the system crashed. Those people were hungry on the day. SASSA did not have an alternate plan. They came to the Western Cape Government, and we had to provide.

So, like you say, we must work together, but when your national agency does not have the capacity to come up with a plan A or B, and on that note, I wish to remind you of my visits to many SASSA offices on many days. People sitting in the rain from 2 o'clock in the morning, only for 30 or 50 to be served and the others to be turned away. We need to find a solution that works for everyone, not only in the Western Cape, but across the country because those problems we are experiencing with SASSA are not limited to the Western Cape, hon Deputy Speaker, but they are pervasive, and they exist across the country.

To our newest member, the hon Suzette Little, thank you for your contribution to the debate. And yes, I am aware of the number of individuals living in our streets. I have also familiarised myself with the report which the City commissioned, I think all 431 page and sadly, the issue with the shelter became an issue because there was asbestos which was unknown at the time. And then the second time around, there was resistance from the community.

One of the issues we face in South Africa is that of nimbyism. Everybody wants to save the poor, the homeless, the most vulnerable, but the minute you wish to plant a shelter in a specific neighbourhood, they would say not in my

backyard. Please take it somewhere else. We will give you the money, but we do not want them here. So, please are stigmatised and that, sadly, is a South African reality which we all need to fight together as hon members.

To hon Conrad Poole, your inputs, the hon member Poole, reflect the reality of the many challenges faced by the Department and its many stakeholders. Our NGOs and NPOs are in distress, and we are ticking. I always say this, we are staring a humanitarian crisis in the face. However, I cannot, and it does not work as I explained, I cannot go to another ministry and say please just give me R200-million until the end of the month or R50-million for the next three months. It does not work that way. So, we have to again, as I said, work with that which we have.

Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me to thank hon Premier Allen Winde for the confidence and trust he placed in me to lead the Department of Social Development in the Sixth Term. To my Cabinet colleagues, your support has been invaluable and to every member, including the Opposition: your support and to those of you who worked with me to improve the lives of the most vulnerable, I thank you. To you especially, hon Bakubaku-Vos, despite the fact that you have to come and read your speech, I know where your heart lies.

To the Standing Committee which has had quite a few Chairs, I wish to say to them thank you very much. We have had robust, yet dignified engagements. The questions were asked, and the answers were given. So, to each and every member of the Standing Committee: thank you for your support.

To the Department. Robert, very capably led by Dr Ronal Macdonald, thank you for your leadership and to each and every member of the DSD family, thank you for the invaluable work that you do despite the many challenges and risks that you face.

To my Head of Ministry, Ms Ananda Nel, your experience, professional and efficient manner in which you led the Ministry and continue to lead the Ministry is commendable. To my personal assistant, Ms Delorees Kotze, thank you for your support. To our Media Liaison officer, Ms Monique Mortlock, thank you for your professionalism and making sure that we have an active media presence and report honestly and truthfully at all times. To the staff, Ms Colleen Ryan, Lynette Louw, Chantelle Pepper, Llewellyn October, Dale Fortune, Arantxa and even our tea-lady, Aunty Nadine who takes care of me, thank you for all that you do.

Leading a Department that deals with the mostly wounded and broken people in society, often one tends to take your work home with you. Despite the fact that you think you switch off, you do tend to take your work home with you. I have always tried to be accessible, kept my phone on and here I need to thank my family for their support. When I get that 10, 11 o'clock phone call at night asking me to engage with a police station or a person who is in need and distress, they have put up with this for the last five years and it was a pleasure for me to serve.



Hon Deputy Speaker, since I am exiting the political arena, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the contribution, collaboration, and the teamwork that I enjoyed by the Parliamentary Team in the Fifth Terms of this Parliament as a former Speaker. And so, as a former Speaker, I wish to leave some guidance to returning members and new members who will come in in the Seventh Term.

To manage yourselves with dignity and decorum. You, as duly elected public reps by citizens, need to model behaviour that children, youth and citizens themselves will aspire to follow, rather than to reduce the House to a farce that discourages citizens from participating in a democratic process. Let us reduce the mudslinging and personal attacks, and rather focus collectively on finding solutions that will benefit all citizens in this Province. I am humbled and deeply grateful to have served the citizens of this province for the last ten years. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That concludes the debate on this Vote. The House will now suspend for two minutes just to allow our guests to leave the Chamber and for new guests to enter.

*[Business of House paused for clearing of bays]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, let us be seated. Mr Poggenpoel, would you be so kind as to read the Eight Order of the Day.

Mr POGGENPOEL: Debate on Vote 2 – Western Cape Appropriation Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon Speaker, Daylin Mitchell.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Premier and hon members of the Provincial Cabinet, hon members of the House, officials, ladies and gentlemen. Hon Deputy Speaker, it is, indeed, a privilege for me as the Speaker, to present the Budget for the 2024/2025 financial year, mindful of the fact that this is a budget for the Seventh Parliament. As a democrat and a strong believer in parliamentary democracy, I am also of the firm view that the new Parliament should have the opportunity to determine its own strategic objectives and path the way how it will execute its constitutional mandate.

It is for that reason, hon Deputy Speaker, that this budget is broadly underpinned by the strategic objectives focusing on the core mandate of the WCPP and the support of our members both new and returning, while we ensure the wellbeing of our staff. As the Speaker, assisted by you, hon Deputy Speaker, and supported by the senior management team, robust engagement with the Parliamentary Oversight Committee to place on the budget and the strategic direction of the Institution in the finest detail, all of which I am not going to repeat here this evening.

From the outset, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank and commend the hon Minister of Finance for her positive outlook and thorough

understanding of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament and its work, and in the manner in which we could engage around the allocation of funds for the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. Hon Deputy Speaker, please allow me to share the identified strategic priorities in their broader sense with you this evening.

First and foremost, we must ensure that good governance, administrative efficiency and institutional capability are the hallmark of our Institution. As entities charged with overseeing executive functioning and passing laws, parliaments are expected to uphold good governance and maintain exemplary standing in the public domain. This pertains, hon Deputy Speaker, to the conduct of individual hon members of Parliament to the conduct of staff and to the management of the business of Parliament as an Institution. In pursuing this, the Western Cape Provincial Parliament will intensify its focus on the core values, ensuring adherence to the code of conduct and policy prescripts for both members and staff.

Hon Deputy Speaker, improving corporate governance through strengthened administrative controls, policy compliance and accountability will also be a strong focus. Sustaining business continuity and building resilience through effective risk mitigation will also be supported with the necessary investment to ensure the business of Parliament proceeds uninterrupted in the context of an ever-increasing risk, including cyber and energy related risks.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we will further embrace agile, future-focused business

and operating models that will promote cost saving and efficiencies, whilst ensuring that the administrative support to members and the Standing Committees is optimal and that ultimately, we execute our mandate as a Legislative Institution effectively.

Hon Deputy Speaker, secondly, we must ensure that effective and meaningful public participation and engagement in our processes and work, continue. As one of the constitutionally mandated functions of the Provincial Parliament, it is imperative that public participation and engagement processes and programmes are embedded in the oversight and law-making functions which is the core mandate of legislatures.

And for this reason, the expansion of citizen service in all of the work of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament remains a critical focus area with an emphasis on transcending mere involvement of the public, but actually deepening the levels and quality of citizen engagement. All public engagement initiatives for the upcoming financial year therefore centres on the following principles and objectives. Expanding the footprint of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament both provincially, nationally, and internationally. Extending the reach of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament in engaging, educating and participation. Spreading knowledge about the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, its processes and most importantly, how the public can engage the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. Also, engaging with the public directly, deepening democracy and enhancing accountability and good governance.

Thirdly, hon Deputy Speaker, effective law-making and oversight of the Executive must be strengthened. As an Institution mandated to ensure effective law-making, oversight of the Executive and public participation, the Western Cape Provincial Parliament will continue to focus on the enhancement of these core functions. We will continue to work towards modernising parliamentary processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness in discharging the mandate through the development and optimisation of various digital applications.

The upgrade and modernisation of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament facilities ensuring appropriate office accommodation and refurbishments remain a key priority. A phased approach will have to be adopted to minimise business interruption. The audiovisual enhancement project entails a substantial transformation of vital meeting places within the Western Cape Provincial Parliament encompassing the main chambers, two committee rooms, the auditorium, the library, the members lounge and the reception and security area. The WCPP envisions a state-of-the-art solution that will propel its stature to the forefront of global parliamentary excellence. To realise this ambition, hon Deputy Speaker, the solution must harness cutting edge AV over IP technologies, ensuring both the latest advancements and seamless integration with existing Legacy systems.

Hon Deputy Speaker, regarding the international relations, the IR policy and implementation plan will be reviewed to identify new opportunities for virtual participation, particularly in the international parliamentary space to increase

the possibility for greater participation by members and staff, whilst minimising the costs associated with travel.

Hon Deputy Speaker, fourthly, effective, and efficient support to members to fulfil their functions as public representatives to the full, must be ensured.

Hon Deputy Speaker, legislatures are at the centre of enabling Parliaments to execute their constitutional mandate. Support to legislatures is extended to them in both the individual capacities and in their collective capacities as members of Standing Committees and of the House. The support extended to members will inter alia continue to include provision of allowances, state-of-the-art tools of trade and conducive office accommodation. We will continue to develop our partnership with academia and civil society for better efficiency, sustainability, and impact, leveraging existing offerings and professional resources from other institutions to the benefit of members as per their individual and collective needs. It will include access to customised capacity building initiatives, as well as pure learning and network opportunities within the inter-parliamentary space, both locally and internationally.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I am now moving onto something that is very close to my heart and that is continuous staff development and wellness is non-negotiable. The Parliamentary Administration is the backbone of the support for an effective parliament. The staff who serve in the Administration thus play a critical role in ensuring a parliament that works and indeed, becomes the leading regional parliament as we envisaged in our vision. The WCPP thus seeks to be the employer of choice and to become an employer of choice, the

WCPP will recognise performing staff in order to affirm the organisational values and celebrate their contribution to the success of the Institution.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we will promote professional development aligned to the WCPP's vision of a modern parliament. We will seek to provide a conducive working environment for staff. We will seek to cultivate an open, inclusive, participatory culture that respects diversity. As we do so, we will work towards embedding the principles of accountability.

Hon Deputy Speaker, please allow me to mention significant milestones achieved during the Sixth Parliament, which would not have been possible without the support of all members across the political divide.

The institutional performance and governance. There was an upwards performance trajectory on the APP targets from 74% to 81% in the 2022/2023 financial year over the strategic period. This Institution received consecutive clean audits throughout the Sixth Parliamentary Term. During the Sixth Parliamentary Term, the Sage system was implemented. This system, hon Deputy Speaker, provides the WCPP with improved HR functionality controls, management reports, HR functional optimisation and full integration with the SAGE X3 financial component. This system will further be enhanced to ensure the ability of the HR section to provide a proactive advisory and consultancy services which may also include the use of people analytics for decision making and policy review.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the provision of free public access enables the public to access the WCPP website at no charge to the user. WCPP ITDS and MTN commenced with the implementation of this system in March 2024. The intranet will provide employees and members of the WCPP, with a dynamic one-stop shop for all information needs, news, announcements, and tools. This intranet, hon Deputy Speaker, will play a significant role in contributing to the goal of modernising the WCPP, improving efficiencies and the way we access information. As the business grows and more processes become digitised, these, too, will form part of our intranet. The intranet will be available, hon Deputy Speaker, from 1 April 2024. The intranet will house all House Papers, applications relevant to the members and SAGE 300 self-service module for members' claims.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in line with this vision to become a leading modern Parliament, a voting application was developed for the WCPP. The design phased of the voting application will be rolled out in the 2024/2025 financial year. Hon Deputy Speaker, the first off-site State of the Province was successfully facilitated in the 2020 at the Rocklands Civic Centre in Mitchells Plain. Following this trend to the 2021 SOPA which was held in Genadendal in the Overberg district, the 2022 SOPA in Velddrif in the West Coast, and more recently, the 2024 SOPA in Paarl in the Cape Winelands district.

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me move on to the approval and rollout of the WCPP's IR policy and implementation which you were appointed as the delegated authority to deal with international relations. Through several discussions,



hon Deputy Speaker, and comprehensive consultation, it was resolved that the WCPP requires an IR strategy and policy which focuses on high level objectives. This policy was approved in 2021 and has been continuously rolled out through the implementation of the annual IR plan. Interparliamentary relations was identified as an important area to position the Western Cape Provincial Parliament as an impactful and relevant regional parliament, rooted in Africa, but connected globally.

Hon Deputy Speaker, some key activities include CPA, Memorandum of Intentions with regional parliaments of Wales and Bavaria, CPA residency programmes and conferences, SoCATT workshops and professional development summits, NCSL legislative summits and the CPA virtual Youth Parliament in 2021.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to move on over to social media which is a very important tool. Over the Sixth Parliamentary Term, the expansion of the WCPP social media presence was prioritised. In pursuing this, the WCPP enhanced its YouTube footprint and messaging on social media platforms through reviewing graphic elements. Furthermore, the commencement of the social media advertising service that expanded the reach of promotion of WCPP events at a significantly reduced cost. Hon Deputy Speaker, most notably the WCPP reached a substantially high number of citizens in its social media advertising for the State of the Province Address.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to touch on public engagement where we introduce

a boardgame called The Order. The boardgame was developed and procured as a PEO educational initiative and tool. It is a fun and fast-paced game based on the content of the public education and outreach workshop. The Western Cape Provincial Parliament corporate video was finalised, and this educational informative tool is also available in all three official languages of the Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, expansion on civil society and engagement by facilitating round tables with SMMEs and persons with disabilities happened in 2023. The WCPP public engagement programme facilitated in the municipal districts also occurred throughout the Sixth Parliamentary Term. The development of the WCPP stakeholder database as a tool for communication with stakeholders and I know that there is still much work to be done on that database, but it is there, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, when I took office as the Speaker, my key strategic objectives was to build a credible WCPP that is respected, reputable and a stable legislative body. To expand our citizen's service to create an institution that is first and foremost, a parliament for the people of the Western Cape. To strengthen the core business with the specific emphasis on its mandate of lawmaking, public participation, and oversight. Strengthening the support that we are providing to our members to ensure optimisation of the impact as legislators and supporting our employees as valuable constituents to ensure highly motivated and a content employee compliment.

Hon Deputy Speaker, please allow me to share the numbers in the budget with you. The WCPP's Budget has increased by R17-million from R241-million, which includes the direct charges, to R258-million. It must, however, be noted that in 2023/2024 an amount of R863 000 was added to the main Appropriation from the 2022/2023 rollovers to fund once-off projects planned for the 2023/2024 financial year. The WCPP had during the 2023 Adjustment Process, embarked on a process of reducing the funding pressures by revoting underspending from the 2023/2024 financial year, to the MTEF.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, funding for the following projects has been provided for. Cyber security which is based on the WCPP Cyber Security Strategy, the Chamber and venue upgrade, static security services that was ordinarily provided for public hearings by the South African Police Services, and obviously, for the provision of the Seventh Parliament which will only be a once-off for the first year of the new term.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the WCPP will continue to provide procedural and related support to the House and Committees to conduct their business of lawmaking and effective oversight. The Provincial Parliament will also continue to promote public participation in its parliamentary process, enabling facilities or members and financial support to political parties will continue so that members and political parties have the appropriate resources to perform their constitutional obligations. This will be continually reviewed and assessed on an annual basis, but I also want to, in closing, hon Deputy Speaker, say that I am looking forward the hon member's contributions today and will take

onboard suggestions which will enhance the capacity of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament to fulfil its constitutional mandate.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, for your unwavering support during this term and to the Secretary, and the entire parliamentary staff: a very big thank you for your efforts in making our institution a leading regional parliament in the family of Legislatures.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it would be remiss of me to not thank my Office under the very capable leadership of Ms Lorika Elliot. A huge thanks of gratitude for all that you do every day to ensure that we become the best regional Parliament. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I now recognise the hon Lekker.

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon members, the African National Congress does not support this Budget Vote. The opening of the Code of Conduct for members of this House reads as follows, and I quote:

“Whereas the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires that all spheres of government promote accountability, responsibility and openness and whereas the Constitution of the Western Cape affirms that the Western Cape Province is founded on responsible and accountable government, and that government must aim to promote a work ethic.” We,

the members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, (a) recognising that we are accountable to the electorate and have a duty to instil and maintain public trust and a democratic institution; (b) affirming that members of the provincial parliament have an obligation to perform their duties conscientiously with honour and dignity, to be true and faithful to the public representatives, having due regard to the common good.”

End quote. Introducing this Budget Vote last year, the hon Speaker pledged that he will, and I quote:

“Protect the honour and dignity of the Provincial Parliament and represent the interests of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament as the Speaker.”

Close quote. At the opening of his presentation of this year’s Budget Vote, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee, the hon Speaker again highlighted the strategic objectives of this Provincial Legislature. The first strategic objective he mentioned was a credible WCPP. It is a pity that this Sixth Parliament may conclude its business with the blight of the hon Deputy Speaker’s saga still unresolved. One does not wish to go into the details of the matter, nor would it be correct to speak much about the matter given that it is still under consideration of this House, other than to note that there seems to be no political will on the side of the Democratic Alliance to conclude the matter before this Parliament dissolves.

When we look at our neighbours in the National Parliament, again, the ANC

leads. The Speaker of the National Assembly is accused and immediately, for the sake of the integrity and credibility of Parliament, she says she will go on an indefinite leave. This is what political office bearers do when they are leaders, when they wish to protect the integrity of the institutions that they lead. But again, we look at the counterparts of the devil's alliance and what their reaction is at the National Parliament, then it is completely different from what their actions are here in this Legislature. One set of rules nationally, another set of rules provincially. Without due process ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, what is your point of order?

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like to know if my friend, the Chief Whip of the Official Opposition, would like to take a very intelligent question ...[Interjection.]

†Die HOOFSWEEP (ANC): Ag, jy mors my tyd nou...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Oh, you're wasting my time now...[Interjection.]]

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: ...from this side of the House.

†Die HOOFSWEEP (ANC): Jy mors my tyd.

[The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): You're wasting my time.]

The MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE: But I have a question ...[Interjection.]

†Die HOOFSWEEP (ANC): Ah-ah, jy kan maar sit.

[The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Ah-ah, you may sit down.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, you may proceed, hon Lekker.

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Without due process, the National DA caucus is calling for the blood of the National Assembly Speaker. No due process, no time to prove her guilt. She must go. This is what the devil alliance nationally says, but here in the Western Cape, the devil alliance has tried every trick in the book to divulge the credibility of this Legislature.

Here, the DA has postponed, postponed, and employed Leningrad tactics to ensure that the matter of the hon Deputy Speaker is swept under the carpet. This matter, though, is not about the hon Deputy Speaker, but it is about the credibility and integrity of this House and its hon members. Instead, the DA has covered up and wished the matter to go away. However, hon members can be assured that the ANC will push in the Seventh Parliament for this matter to be dealt with. I told you *mos*, Maseko, I am coming back. Former hon members of this House have been called before by the DA for the sole purpose of embarrassment. The ANC will not hesitate to push for accountability.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Speaker was quick in his opening remarks to justify a 12% increase in the budget of Programme 1 and was at pains to explain that it formed part of the core business of this Legislature. While we can

understand that when the 3% increase in institutional enablement, we must agree that the hon Maseko, when she questions the 7% increase in budget again for the budget of the Office of the Secretary. [Interjections.] Ah-ah, do not look at me like that. You are intimidating me. [Laughing.] [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Lekker ...[Interjection.]

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): As murmurings ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Lekker, your hon members when they engage across the House without speaking through me, get really upset. So, I am asking that you control, and you speak through me, please.

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Through you, hon member Maseko is intimidating me, hon Deputy Speaker. As murmurings of too much international travel continues in the corridors while WCPP staff have to work harder with less budget. We await for the hon Speaker to justify that the Office of the Secretary has its mandate and its international travel as part of the core business of this Legislature.

In the light of the cyber-attack, we must certainly welcome the increase in the budget of Institutional Management Enablement and hope that this is never repeated again. Another strategic objective raised by the hon Speaker in his opening remarks to the Committee, was the staff morale. Something that I am very passionate about. As the ANC, we were one of the first to raise the issue



of low staff morale in this Institution. This was confirmed by the subsequent CCMA case, as well as the cards and budget yet expecting WCPP staff to work more for less.

In this budget process, we noted that five resignations and the high turnover of staff, and while the people management of less than 10% and over is standard. The fact that according to these same WCPP officials themselves, the trend is that it is the newer staff members that are leaving. This speaks volumes for the toxic institutional culture that exists in WCPP.

Instead of alarm bells going off for this Institution and its toxic institutional culture, fingers are rather pointed to the new recruits who seemingly cannot acclimatise themselves, and therefore decide to exit. With the lack of urgency and representativity, with the lack of urgency of diversity and with the lack of urgency for new ideas and innovation, we can well understand why new recruits, especially when possessing talent and skills, take those talents and skills somewhere else very, very fast.

Take, for example, the serious challenge we members have and dare I add, women members have, when having to access the garage late at night. Like hallo, it is almost 9 o'clock. As public representatives, surely there must be an inherent concern for safety, which I think hon MEC Meyer does not care about our safety. Look at his gestures. Yet, the message we get from this Legislature is that they are more concerned about the safety of the building, than they are about us as members.

When we raised these matters of security and in particular, access to the garage from the building, over and over and over again we are simply referred to the last answer. I am sure it rings a bell. It happened here three weeks ago. Obviously, the last answer was not good enough. That is why we raise it again and again, simply to be told the same lame excuse of why this concern cannot be addressed. A letter is wiped out from the Department of Infrastructure saying why it is not possible. No innovation, no problem-solving skills, nor an attempt to address the concern. Simply, a bureaucratic process.

This is the toxic institutional culture that we allude to, and this is the toxic institutional culture that makes new recruits to leave this very same Institution. Dare we say maybe WCPP is first waiting for something ghastly to happen to a member before they take the safety of members seriously. Clearly, what happened to the member of the EFF was nothing. And hopefully by now, all members would note that this goes way beyond party politics because as members, irrespective of party affiliation or maybe unless you, hon MEC, with protection, we are sitting ducks. In fact, maybe that is why the matter is not taken seriously either, by the hon Speaker or his hon Deputy because they have protection. But the toxic culture here at the WCPP is also displayed in getting as little people involved as possible.

Programme 3, Public Engagement, has received the lowest increase in the entire budget vote of just over 1,5%. As the ANC, we are not surprised because we have been consistent that taxpayers have not been receiving value for money

in this programme. But even worse, still because the DA and those running the PEO do not believe in public engagement. As with our opposition to the failed Thetha Nathi Programme, which was a political project of the then, Mr Mnqasela, as we can clearly see now with the new political party using it as a slogan.

The problem is that the devil alliance believes that public engagement is the same as stakeholder management. The DA does not believe in public engagement. It makes deals with stakeholders. That is why they are happy with a number of 35 public at hearings. This, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to hon Maseko and hon Bosman, is the politics of public engagement in the DA, if you do not know by now. After the Appropriation Debates, the ANC has been consistent in making proposals on how to involve public ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, please take your seat. There is a point of order. Hon Bosman.

Mr G BOSMAN (DA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I would like to know if the hon member is prepared to take a question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Lekker ...[Interjection.]

Mr G BOSMAN (DA): But there was comment by hon Lekker, not hon member Dugmore.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon Lekker ...[Interjection.]

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Wait!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may proceed. Hon Lekker.

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you. So, let me repeat again. One of the proposals we made. Get community radio stations and community newspapers involved. Reach MOOs with them if need be. There are community radio stations in Gugulethu and Samora Machel. There is a community newspaper KwaLanga and they are in Mitchells Plain as they are across the platteland. There are community radio stations across the province. Engage these. The ANC has been consistent about the lack of use on YouTube and websites. The hon Bosman now wishes to propose Facebook and Twitter Live when the ANC has consistently made this proposal. Check the Hansard well if there is any in the Hansard recorded.

We have also said PEO must engage political parties directly and we will buzz people if need be, and if the budget is made available.

Finally, hon Deputy Speaker, as I conclude, the hearing of the Provincial Powers Bill and the attendance of the first scheduled hearing at the Legislature for the Metro, which had to be postponed due to capacity issues, must be a lesson for all of us. Firstly, my apologies. Firstly, it is a lesson to us as

members of what it means when the Constitution says: the people shall govern. This should be standard in terms of the number that we have already seen that we only get 35 people in the public hearings.

Secondly, it should be a lesson to this Legislature. Arrange MOUs with municipalities so that community halls can be used. It was inefficient and ineffective to state that the hearing will be in this building, but then again, this has been public engagements and committee management in the last few years: ineffective and inefficient. We must take these community meetings seriously. High turnout as the Provincial Powers Bill, the BELA Bill should be standard because this is what we mean when we shout † “Amandla! Ngawethu!” [Power! It is ours!] The power belongs to the people and I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Number four.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh!

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Are you ready for the blue lights? †Hayi wena [no you...[Interjection.]]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, no, no. Hon Lekker, you are done. Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon Wendy Kaizer-Philander.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape works because the Provincial Parliament works. Hon Deputy Speaker, if there is one thing that is often overlooked in South Africa, it is the role of our democratic institutions playing in ensuring good governance. This is a result of the National Assembly, as well as eight provincial legislatures being deemed irrelevant due to ANC mismanagement. People have lost trust in these institutions because they do not function as they should, providing both stringent oversight and a transparent look into the work of government for the public.

Hon Deputy Speaker, there is however, one provincial legislature that performs its functions to the highest level and that is the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. The Western Cape Provincial Parliament runs like a well-oiled machine. The legislative process is closely followed for both provincial Bills, as well as national legislation referred to the WCPP by the NCOP. We have comprehensive and regular Standing Committee meetings where both National and Provincial Government's actions are scrutinised, and we conduct oversight onsite at Government facilities and projects.

Hon Deputy Speaker, administrative excellence is a requirement for an effective Parliament and as such, the various planning committees enable planning and organisational certainty with the help of a professional civil service. Our programme is communicated at least weekly, and this ensures that the public is also aware when important events are taking place. This is

especially important as it relates to public participation processes for proposed Legislation.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is because the WCPP is committed to upholding its values of respect, transparency, honesty, integrity, accountability, and impartiality. The Western Cape Provincial Parliament is a legislature that works for everyone in the Western Cape, regardless of their party-political support. There is simply no substitute for strong democratic values and in the Western Cape, we know that upholding these values in Parliament is ultimately the key to serving our constituents well.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the level of service delivery excellence maintained by the Western Cape Government would not be possible without a strong Provincial Parliament. Our Institution provides the best oversight of any Legislature in the country. We hold regular Sittings filled with constructive debates of public importance and provide ample opportunity to scrutinise Government policy and programmes through regular committee meetings. We hold our Ministers to account through oral and written questions, and they answer them within the prescribed period. The Western Cape Provincial Parliament is also the only legislature in the country where the hon Premier answers questions without notice by-weekly during sitting periods. In stark contrast, ANC-controlled legislatures perform a version of oversight where answers can take months to arrive, if at all they arrive.

Hon Deputy Speaker, oversight also means that problems or challenges are

identified so that improvements and adjustments can be made where necessary. Hon Deputy Speaker, no one is saying that this is perfect, but we are committed to making sure everything we do is for the benefit of our residents. Yes, sometimes plans and programmes face difficulties, †maar ons sit nie met ons hande gevou nie. Ons is altyd op soek na maniere om beter na die behoeftes van ons mense om te sien. [but we do not sit with our hands folded. We are always looking at ways to look better after the needs of our people.]

The implosion of the National Assembly under the ANC has directly contributed to the widespread corruption that has dumped our country into a fiscal crisis. †Dit sou nooit die geval gewees het indien die ANC nie deur dekades se korrupsie die Staat leeg gesteel het nie. As die Nasionale Vergadering gefunksioneer het soos dit moes en korrupte politici aanspreeklik gehou het, sou die prentjie vir miljoene mense vandag soveel anders gewees het en soveel beter gewees het. As miljarde rande wat in kaders se bankrekeninge rondlê, eerder in infrastruktuur, gesondheidsorg en opvoeding belê is, sou miljoene mense steeds nie in armoede geleef het nie.

[It would never have been the case if the ANC through decades of corruption has not stolen the State empty. If the National Assembly functioned as it is supposed to and held corrupt politicians accountable, the picture would have been so different today for millions of people and so much better. If billions of Rands lying around in cadres bank accounts, had rather been invested in infrastructure, health care and education, millions of people would not still be living in poverty.]



Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Provincial Parliament also prioritises civic education for citizens, helping them to better understand what they should expect from their public representatives and democratic institutions. This is the key ingredient in a healthy democracy. The public must be able to understand how the activities of Government and the Legislature affect them. This is of the utmost importance in an election year as an informed voter is able to make their choice on the basis of facts and of their own interest. An uninformed voter is much more likely to fall for cheap tricks from shameless politicians as the hon members on the opposite side, that cause them to vote against their own interest.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Alliance understands the vital importance of our Provincial Legislatures and where we govern, we invest in our Institutions because a Provincial Parliament that works, ensures that the Western Cape works. The Western Cape Provincial Parliament allocated budget ensure accountability, transparency, and integrity in the Western Cape Government. Of the budget, 33% has been allocated to strengthen the oversight functions of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, 25% of the budget has been allocated to enhance public involvement to deepen and entrench people-centred democracy in South Africa. There is a year-on-year expansion in public partnerships meaning increased opportunities for the public to participate in Legislative activities. In the 2024/2025 financial year, 24 public education initiatives will be implemented.

Hon Deputy Speaker, at this point, I wish to thank you, hon Speaker, and

yourself as well, hon Deputy Speaker, for your leadership. Thank you for the culture change that makes this Institution a great institution. You really lead with example and give true meaning to the work and as thus, lead with conviction. The last bastion of democracy in South Africa that actually works, will use its budget to work for the people of the Western Cape through holding their elected representative accountable ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: [Interjections.]

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Let me also thank, hon Deputy Speaker, the unsung heroes, each and every official in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. Thank you for the diligent staff at WCPP and thank you for enabling us to deal with the business of Parliament. Also, allow me to thank our political staff on the fifth floor, each and every staff member is truly valued for their contribution. Not just for our support, but to the betterment of this Institution.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Alliance supports this Budget. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Kaizer-Philander and Chief Whip. I now call on the hon Speaker Mitchell.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, it is always very difficult to respond in this debate or in this Vote because Parliament, unlike the Executive, is a parliament for all the political

parties. So, this is not a DA Parliament. The Parliament consists of seven political parties, and all being represented here. So, I am very mindful on the way I respond.

But I think it would be remiss of me, hon Deputy Speaker, if I do not correct some of the ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mvimbi! Just give. I cannot hear.

The SPEAKER: It would be remiss of me, hon Deputy Speaker, if I do not highlight or correct some of the information that has been presented as facts to the House. Hon Deputy Speaker, when we engaged the Parliamentary Oversight Committee and the issue of access and the safety of members because it is our duty, both mine and yours, to ensure that Infrastructure and the members and the staff of this Institution are kept safe at all times.

We immediately initiated an engagement through the Department of Infrastructure and the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety with the WCPP. They had an onsite meeting to see how best we can address that. So, it is absolutely not true that we are disregarding the inputs made by the Parliamentary Oversight Committee. That onsite meeting has already taken place and the Department of Infrastructure and Police Oversight and Community Safety is engaging SAPS and from an infrastructure perspective, it is engaging the WCPP to see how best we can address that.

Hon Deputy Speaker ...[Interjections.] hon Deputy Speaker ...[Interjections.]  
hon Deputy Speaker, I think it is important to just put it on record, but that  
has, in fact, already taken place.

And then, something else that I think needs to be corrected. So, when we speak  
about toxic culture and the environment, we have all agreed that the in the  
Western Cape Provincial Parliament there are some flaws and there were some  
issues and again, through the engagement over the last year and a half with the  
Parliamentary Oversight Committee, the Institution has embarked on that  
culture journey that will be rolled out in the Seventh Parliamentary Term.

So, they are not just things that we are saying here for the sake of saying  
something for it to look or to sound good, we have actually put it in action.  
And for that, I would like to thank through the Secretary and the  
Administration, for actually giving effect to the inputs made by hon members  
across the political divide because again, this is not a DA Parliament, it is a  
parliament democratically elected by the people of this province. So, I feel  
very, very, very strongly about this when hon members come to this Parliament  
and make political statements, in particular when it comes to the officials that  
work tirelessly. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Speaker, it will be remiss of me also not to  
highlight that if you look at the staff compliments across this country, this

Institution has got the least amount of staff ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The SPEAKER: ...the least amount of ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The SPEAKER: The least amount of money gets allocated from the National Treasury. [Interjections.] Hon Deputy Speaker, when we speak about the value-add of staff that work tirelessly, then we actually need to acknowledge the work that is actually being done with the limited resources because if the National Treasury had given this Province their equitable share, we would not have been in this situation, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I need to touch on ... [Interjections.] I need to touch on ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore.

The SPEAKER: I need to touch on and I think it is a public engagement and public education. So, we have a seven point ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore, please! I cannot hear. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Speaker, we speak about public engagement and outreach, and the work that is not being done. We are 42 hon members in this Parliament representing 7,2-million citizens: 7,2-million citizens. But we expect ...[Interjections.] we expect ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The SPEAKER: We expect four and six officials to serve those 7,2-million citizens. So, when we come here, hon Deputy Speaker, and we lambast the support being provided, can we please just put it into context. And I want to thank the Administration, in particular that component that works with six or seven officials, that manages that unit to serve 7,2-million citizens that we have 42 hon members of doing.

Hon Deputy Speaker and then lastly, I do want to touch on credibility, and I do want to touch on the way that we engage as hon members to one another. We work on the premise, and I say premise because when stand here and we get elected, we raise our right hands and say, 'so help me, God' because we are then hon members. But when we come into the House and we engage one another, we sometimes forget that we are those hon members. So, when we speak about credibility from a building an institution, can we also look at the credibility as public representatives that the citizens entrusted us to be when we come into this House.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I want to thank all political parties for the manner in which we have engaged in the Parliamentary Oversight Committee. Through the Parliamentary Oversight Committee that started the now hon Minister of Finance chaired it in this term, then the late hon Botha chaired and then, hon Maseko chaired it and then, hon Kaizer-Philander chaired it. So, I want to say thank you very, very much for the work that is being done in the Parliamentary Oversight Committee. Thank you for holding us accountable. Thank you for making sure that when we appear, that we appear in the interests of all the 42 hon members of this Parliament.

And then, it would be remiss of me not to thank the hon Lekker for the robust engagement. I think at the end of the day, we all want the same things and to ensure that Parliament functions and works. I think the manner in which we sometimes go about it differs but thank you very much also to hon Lekker for the manner in which we could. Sometimes, not necessarily offline, but thank you very much for your inputs and your recommendations and suggestions which as you heard in my reply, I do take on. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. That concludes the debate on this Vote. That will also conclude the business for the day. Hon members, tomorrow we begin sharply at 10 o'clock. If I can just ask that the meeting will now be exited. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 20:48.