
WEDNESDAY, 27 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 Deputy Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may be seated. A very good morning to everybody here in the Chamber. Before we begin, I would just like to read some of the Rules of this morning's Sitting, when in this case – let me just start where it begins. Suppose a member of this Parliament elects to participate virtually and not from the Chamber, in that case it is the member's responsibility to ensure that they have good connectivity and good quality audio and video and that there are no disturbances during this Sitting.

I would also like to remind the media that are online and have been granted access to MS Teams that they may not use the chat room or speak or activate their cameras while the Sitting is in progress and just to remind the members in the gallery that they may not participate in this Sitting.

Hon members are reminded that no interjections are permitted during these hybrid Sittings, and to this end I draw the hon members' attention to Rule 40 of the Standing Rules.

Before we commence with the Orders of the Day I request everyone to rise for a rendition of the National Anthem of the Republic of South Africa.

[Rendition of National Anthem.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. You may be seated. Order, members! The Secretary will read the first Order of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

†Die SEKRETARIS: Debat oor Begrotingspos 13: Kultuursake en Sport – Wes-Kaapse Begrotingswetsontwerp [W 1–2024].

[The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 13: Cultural Affairs and Sport – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2024].]

Die ADJUNKSPEAKER: †Baie dankie, Sekretaris. [The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Secretary.] I now recognise the hon Minister Marais.

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Deputy Speaker, honourable members, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. *Goeiemore*. Molweni.

A big thank you to Dan Lukas of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's Office in Beaufort West, the hon Speaker's Constituency, for that lovely rendition of our national anthem.

†Dankie, Dan, dat jy die hart van die Karoo Kaap toe bring vir ons Begrotingspos. Ons waardeer dit, en waardeer jou.

[Thank you Dan, that you brought the heart of the Karoo to the Cape for our Budget Vote. We appreciate it, and appreciate you.]

I also want to thank all the performers from projects supported by our Department who performed on the Concourse of the Western Cape Parliament this morning. They are representatives of the Cape Town Carnival Costume Parade, the wonderful magicians from the Cape Town School of Magic, performers from the CPO String Quartet and the IMAD Youth Band from Khayelitsha.

†Uit die hart uit dankie aan elkeen van julle!

[From the heart, thank you to each of you!]

Deputy Speaker, when I listened to Dan Lukas on the saxophone, I was filled with hope for the future and for our country. During South Africa's darkest hours, in 1984, Eddy Grant recorded the hit song "Give me Hope, Jo'anna," with the refrain "Give me hope until the morning comes."

More of this song – which in its day was known as "The anthem of Mitchells Plain," – at the end of this speech.

In this regard, Daniel Burnham, an American architect, said the following in support of building skyscrapers in Chicago in the nineteenth century, when some criticised their construction. He said:

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir people's blood, and probably themselves will not be realised. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die; but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistency."

At Team DCAS, as we refer to ourselves, we imagine the future we desire, and creating that future through the programmes of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport.

†Dit is programme wat ons finansier, bestuur en 'n ogie oor hou in belang van

die Wes-Kaapse belastingbetaler, in wie se diens ons staan.

[These are programmes that we fund, manage and keep an eye on in the interest of the Western Cape taxpayer, in whose service we stand.]

Before I get to the numbers of the budget itself, Deputy Speaker, I wish to welcome a few inspirational members of the public whom I invited as they embody hope and the ability to turn dreams into reality.

I always say that if your dreams do not scare you, you do not dream big enough. Our guests show us how to dream big.

Please stand when I mention your name, so that we can acknowledge your contribution.

Firstly, the Dutch Consul-General in Cape Town, Ms Helene Rekkers. You have shown such an interest in South African culture and cultural emancipation that I just felt you had to be our guest today. You are most welcome, Madam, all protocol observed!

†Dan verwelkom ek twee vroue van formaat – Marlene le Roux van Kunstekaap, met wie die Departement en ek 'n spesiale verhouding vennootskap het, en Karen Meiring, voormalige kanaalhoof van kykNET. Sterkte Karen, met jou nuutste groot projek – ons sien uit om te kyk!

[Then I welcome two formidable women – Marlene le Roux from Kunstekaap, with whose Department I have a special relationship and partnership, and

Karen Meiring, former chief of channels of kykNET. I wish you strength, Karen, with your latest project – we look forward to watching!]

Jabaar Mohamed inspires us as he continues to break new ground on behalf of the physically challenged.

†Mnr Edmund Jeneker is die voorsitter van die Suidoosterfees se direksie. [Tussenwerpsels.] Sterkte met die reëlins vir vanjaar se fees, wat om die draai is! [Mr Edmund Jeneker is the Chairman of the Suidoosterfees's Board of Directors. [Interjections.] I wish you strength with the arrangements for this year's festival, which is just around the corner!]

Billy Domingo, Festival Director, who has done so much for Cape Town, a special welcome to you.

†Ook in die galery is JP Naude, president van die Wes-Kaapse Sportfederasie.

[Also in the gallery is JP Naude, president of the Western Cape Sport Federation.]

I simply cannot think of a more driven and motivated person to fill that position.

To Cliffie, Anthea, and Bongani "Ubobo", representing Homeless Soccer and Oasis, as well as Ricky from the Cape Flats YMCA. Thanks for your massive

and selfless contribution to giving hope and a fresh start to some of the most marginalised in the Western Cape.

†Die kok en televisiepersoonlikheid, Marinda Engelbrecht, vereer ons met haar teenwoordigheid. Dankie, Marinda vir wat jy en Margit vir ons provinsie se kinders se teateropvoeding doen met die Vlooi-opvoerings.

Mnr Michael Jonas van die Afrikaanse Taalmonument en Museum in die Paarl en Eureka Barnard van SASNEV en die Langenhoven Gedenkfonds. Julle dra ons provinsie se kultuur op die hart en ek is so dankbaar vir jul bydrae om van die Wes-Kaap 'n beter plek te maak.

[The chef and television personality, Marinda Engelbrecht, honours us with her presence. Thank you, Marinda for what you and Margit do for our province's children's theater education with the Vlooi performances.

Mr Michael Jonas of the Afrikaans Language Monument and Museum in Paarl and Eureka Barnard of SASNEV and the Langenhoven Memorial Fund. You have our province's culture at heart and I'm so grateful for your contribution to make the Western Cape a better place.]

Deputy Speaker, the year-on-year budget increased from an adjusted appropriation of R888,290 million in 2023/24, to a final appropriation of R903,388 million in 2024/25, resulting in a net increase of R15 million mainly due to inflationary increases. Apart from the inflationary increases, the Department did not receive additional funding.

While the year-on-year analysis for our budget reflects an increase, the MTEF Budget decreased by R10,7 million for 2024/25 due to fiscal consolidation.

In addition, once-off funding for EPWP Expansion, R7 million, and Artists in Schools, R2 million, received in the 2023/24 financial year, was not reallocated in this year's budget.

Deputy Speaker and honourable members, the Department also had to absorb the cost-of-living adjustment in its baseline allocation as the impact of salary increases was not funded by Treasury. Salary increases absorbed includes the carry-through effect of 2023's salary increase of 7,5% and the 2024 salary increase of 4,9%, which is an inflationary increase. Fiscal consolidation, together with the impact of the salary increases, negatively affected the Department's budget intended for services.

That means the budget cuts – of which such a large part is because of the in-year budget cuts by the inept ANC Government which our Provincial Government is rightly challenging – makes it much harder for us to serve our people at the levels we want to. Most affected are transfers to Non-Profit Organisations which decreased by 12,39%. To minimise the impact on services of the fiscal consolidation and impact of cost of living adjustments, we unfunded 22 posts across the Department. Those are 22 fewer dedicated officials that we could have hired to serve our people, purely because of

National ANC budget cuts to the people of the Western Cape.

Regardless of the declining fiscal and economic environments, we ensured that our budget continues to prioritise the recovery of our sectors by aligning it to the Western Cape Recovery Plan in the areas of Jobs, Safety, and Wellbeing. We also ensured that basic service outcomes are protected despite our declining budget.

†*Deputy Speaker*, die Departement van Kultuursake en Sport se begroting is opgedeel in vier programme, naamlik Administrasie, Kultuursake, Biblioteke en Argiewe, en Sport en Ontspanning. Vervolgens kyk ons na spesifieke onderafdelings van die Departement.

[*Deputy Speaker*, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's budget is divided into four programmes, namely Administration, Cultural Affairs, Libraries and Archives and Sport and Recreation. We now look at our specific subdivisions of the Department.]

Let us start with Arts, Culture and Language Services. During the year under review, the Department provided language support to Western Cape Government departments, in the form of editing, translations, and interpreting services in the three official languages of the Western Cape and South African Sign Language. This demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that all individuals have access to Government information, resources and opportunities.

†Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal is verlede jaar tot 'n Suid-Afrikaanse ampstaal verklaar, wat hoop vir soveel gehoorgestremde en dowe Suid-Afrikaners gebring het. Deur middel van ons Taaldienste Eenheid, en in samewerking met die Pan-Suid-Afrikaanse Taalraad of PanSAT, het ons basiese opleiding in gebaretaal verskaf aan personeel van verskeie Wes-Kaapse Staatsdepartemente wat regstreeks met die publiek skakel, en wat gesigkontak met die publiek het.

[South African Sign Language was last year declared an official South African language, that brings hope to so many hearing handicapped and deaf South Africans. Through our Language Services Unit, and in cooperation with the Pan South African Language Board or PanSAT, we provided basic training to staff of various Western Cape Government departments who liaise directly with the public and who have facial contact with the public.]

It is with great pride that DCAS commemorated the 200th anniversary of the existence of isiXhosa as a published and written language by hosting a Community Outreach Programme and Colloquium in Langa, Cape Town, where I delivered the keynote address.

†Die Departement van Kultuursake en Sport verskaf reeds sedert 2021 finansiering aan die Drietalige Woordeboek van die Kaaps-projek in samewerking met die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland en die Heal the Hood Projek, 'n gemeenskapsorganisasie sonder winsbejag. Die projek fokus tans op die navorsing vir en die ontwikkeling van, die Kaaps/Afrikaanse/Engelse

Drietalige Woordeboek.

[The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport has been providing financing since 2021 to the Trilingual Dictionary of the Kaaps project in cooperation with the University of the Western Cape and the Heal the Hood Project, non-profit a community organisation. The project currently focuses on the research for and development of the Kaaps/Afrikaans/English Trilingual Dictionary.]

Deputy Speaker, hon members, a highlight of our Music Programme is the Journey to Jazz Festival in Prince Albert. DCAS will again support this festival scheduled to take place from 1 to 5 May 2024. It takes place under the banner of PACT, a project run by enthusiastic and creative local youth, all from Prince Albert. Choral Music is important for offering safe protective factors for youth in that it enables mass participation and teaches the values of accountability and teamwork. The Department allocated R400 000 to conduct choral music engagements in all provincial districts.

The engagements were coupled with training of choir conductors in schools and communities. A Symposium of Choral Music will, for instance, be held next month.

†Die munisipaliteite van Swartland, Drakenstein en Stellenbosch het in samewerking met die Nasionale Departement van Kleinsakeontwikkeling 'n reeks werkwinkels en inligtingsessies aangebied, gemik op kleinsakeondernemings in die kreatiewe sektor, soos byvoorbeeld

filmvervaardigers, musikante, musiekvervaardigers, produksiematskappye, fotografe, handwerkers, ontwerpers en ontwerpateljee, teksskrywers, skrywers en uitgewers.

[The municipalities of Swartland, Drakenstein and Stellenbosch have offered in cooperation with the National Department of Small Business Development a series of workshops and information sessions, aimed at small business enterprises in the creative sector, for example film producers, musicians, music producers, production companies, photographers, craft workers, designers and design studios, script writers and publishers.]

These programmes engender hope in these important industries, of which the resilience will strengthen their communities.

In 2024/25, despite budgetary constraints, we are continuing our Artists in Schools Programme, which means more job opportunities for our professional arts facilitators placed in schools. R1 million rand will be contributed to ensure the continuity of the programme.

Together with several partners, the Department continues to consolidate Community Arts Centre Programmes. The network was founded by just 12 members in 2022, but today it boasts over 30 Arts Centres throughout the province.

†*Deputy Speaker*, en agbare lede, die Departement het R2,5 miljoen rand toegewys aan die ontwikkeling van die kunste in die verskillende distrikte in

die Wes-Kaap in die 2024/25 finansiële jaar. Die Dramaprogram van ons Departement wat plaasgevind het in die Distrikte Tuinroete, Overberg en Kaapse Wynlande het werklik kwaliteitproduksies vir die DCAS Dramafees voortgebring. Ons dramaprogram het daadwerklike opheffing van die jeug in die tersaaklike gemeenskappe tot gevolg.

Groepe soos Siyakhona Youth Development in Thembaletu bied hul eie Kunstefees in George aan en is reeds landwyd bekend daarvoor.

Ons is so verskriklik trots op die Shack Teater in Swellendam, gevestig deur ons eie mnr Freek Oerson, wat gegroei het van deelnemer aan DCAS se Ontwikkelingsprogram tot impresario van sy eie teater, van wie die inskrywings uitblink by die Zabalaza-fees, soos aangebied by die Baxter-teater hier in Kaapstad.

[Deputy Speaker, and hon members, the Department has allocated R2,5 million rand to the development of the arts in the various districts in the Western Cape in the 2024/25 financial year. The Drama Programme of our Department that took place in the Districts Garden Route, Overberg and Cape Winelands really produced quality productions for the DCAS Drama Festival. Our drama programme results in real upliftment of the youth in the relevant communities.

Groups such as Siyakhona Youth Development in Thembaletu offer their own Art Festival in George and is already known for it across the country.

We are extremely proud of the Shack Theatre in Swellendam, established by our own Mr Freek Oerson, who has grown as a participant in the DCAS's Development Programme to impresario of his own theatre, of which the entries excel at the Zabalaza Festival, as performed at the Baxter Theatre here in Cape Town.]

Indeed, it is for these outstanding achievements that we will continue to strengthen our partnership with Baxter Theatre and Zabalaza to provide more opportunities for young emerging theatre practitioners to stage their plays at the iconic Baxter Theatre. The funding allocated to these programmes ensures the continuity of skills transfer by sector professionals like Abduraghman Adams and Mdu Kweyama. Thanks for the hope you turn into dreams, and the dreams you turn into reality.

†In samewerking met verskeie vennote soos Pansat sal ons Departement voortgaan om hoop en geleenthede te skep vir ontluikende en voornemende skrywers. Ons sal voortgaan om 'n kultuur van lees en skryf aan te wakker en om die geleenthede daarvoor wyd en ver in ons gemeenskappe in te dra. Ons is die trotse aanbieders van die Letterkundige Kunsteprogram – die Literary Arts Programme. Volgende jaar sal ons 'n bloemlesing publiseer van kortverhale in isiXhosa deur deelnemers aan ons Jong Skrywers-program.

[In cooperation with various partners such as Pansat our Department will continue to create hope and opportunities for emerging and prospective writers. We will continue to foster a culture of reading and writing and to take the opportunities for that far and wide into our communities. We are the

proud presenters of the Letterkundige Kunsteprogram – the Literary Arts Programme. Next year we will publish a bloemlesing of our short stories in isiXhosa by participants in our Young Writers Programme.]

This is so lovely that it bears repeating: Next year we will be launching a collection of isiXhosa short stories and poems from our Young Writers' Programme.

We are excited to see the return of our successful DCAS Dance Festival that took place at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone, featuring 18 dance organisations from the Metro and Cape Winelands. The next festival will stage performances from more than 200 dancers.

Our Annual Arts, Culture and Heritage Funding Programme affords an opportunity to Arts and Culture organisations, individual artists, and arts companies to apply for assistance for the execution of their programmes within communities and thus creating job opportunities, and promoting safer and more cohesive communities. The Department will support the Arts and Culture sector to the tune of R17 million in the 2024/25 financial year, mindful of the challenges confronting this sector.

Since the launch of our online application system, we have seen an exponential increase in our applications. The application process for the 2024/25 financial year closed on the 8th March 2024 and 381 applications were received. It is pleasing to note that more than 40% of applications

received are from the rural areas of the province. In 2024/25 the Department plans to have more interactive sessions with beneficiaries and forge networks and collaborations amongst organisations within the value chain. Furthermore, the online system is to be enhanced to assist with the process and facilitate goal orientated outcomes.

Deputy Speaker, honourable members, turning to the Initiation Programme. The Western Cape Government is committed to the preservation and safe practice of the rite of passage and has adopted a zero-tolerance approach to the deaths of initiates. To this end the Department allocated R3.1 million to sustain the programme. In preparation for the summer season 2023, a total of 103 cultural practitioners were trained in health and hygiene principles. We also appointed monitors of initiation schools from various cultures such as amaHlubi, Basotho and amaXhosa. Furthermore we purchased and issued protective clothing and equipment to the practitioners for infection prevention control during the season.

As part of our commitment for a Safe Initiation Programme, we are developing a digital system for the Initiation programme to assist with early detection of conditions that could lead to deaths, upscaling our current monitoring system and increase our training efforts for the cultural practitioners. The first phase of the system was approved by the Western Cape Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee and will be launched during the next summer season.

DCAS, in partnership with the Western Cape Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee will continue to facilitate workshops with initiation forums and communities to ensure compliance to the Customary Initiation Act. These interventions will maintain a strict, conducive and harmonious environment for all.

†Agb Adjunkspeaker en agbare lede, ons kyk vervolgens na die Afdeling Museums, Erfenis en Geografiese Name. In trotse teenstelling met die res van die land beskik die Wes-Kaap oor 32 behoorlik funksionerende museums. Teen die einde van verlede jaar het ons ons nuutste museum, op Elandsbaai aan die Weskus aan die publiek oopgestel. In die afgelope boekjaar het ons uitstekende vordering gemaak met die opdatering van die uitstalling by die Worcester Museum en opwindende toevoegings tot sowel die George Museum as die Bartolomeus Dias Museum-terrein in Mosselbaai. Die Departement sal voortgaan om ons provinsie se museums te ondersteun, en 'n begroting van R12 miljoen rand is toegewys in die 2024/25 finansiële jaar.

[Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, we now look at the Division Museum, Heritage and Geographical Names. In proud contrast to the rest of the country, the Western Cape has 32 properly functioning museums. By the end of last year we opened our latest museum, at Elands Bay on the West Coast, to the public. In the past financial year we have made excellent progress with the updating of the exhibition at the Worcester Museum and exciting additions to both the George Museum as the Bartholomew Dias Museum site in Mossel Bay. The Department will continue to support our province's museums, and a budget of R12 million was allocated in the

2024/25 financial year.]

The Cape Town Museum Walk-In Centre was inaugurated in November last year. The completion of the final phase of Cape Town Digital, featuring the Mapping Cape Town Project, will help immortalise the rich tapestry of our history. We have launched digital exhibitions showcasing narratives such as the Peninsula Maternity Hospital and "Cape Town through the Eyes of the Archives," alongside celebrating the contributions of Impactful Women.

†Betreffende erfenis, is die Departement 'n belangrike rolspeler in die nasionale Weerstand- en Bevrydingserfenisroete Projek – die sogenaamde Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route Project.

In die nabye toekoms sal ons 'n projek takel om die nalatenskap van vroeë vestigings deur plaaslike bevolkingsgroepe te herdenk deur die Tussen Die Riviere-Projek, wat 'n buitelugtentoonstelling oor inheemse deursettingsvermoë by Oude Molen hier in Kaapstad sal insluit.

[Heritage, the Department is an important role player in the national Weerstand- en Bevrydingserfenisroete Projek – the so-called Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route Project.

In the near future we will tackle a project to honour the heritage of early settlements by local population groups through the Tussen die Riviere-Projek, which will include an outdoor exhibition on indigenous settlements at Oude Molen here in Cape Town.]

This year the Department is looking forward to the finalisation of the UNESCO World Heritage inscription at Diepkloof Rock Shelter on the West Coast, and the Pinnacle Point Site Complex on the Southern Cape coast. We manage these significant archaeological sites with the assistance of the heritage authority within the province, Heritage Western Cape.

Heritage Western Cape continues to play an important role in the value chain of commercial, residential and industrial development related economic opportunities within the province.

The Heritage Western Cape Service Delivery Improvement Plan and the recent undertaking of a Lean Management Project with the Lean Institute Africa aims to improve the efficiencies and quality of service delivery in permit application processes as one of its streams of service to the public. It is a service delivery measure being put in place to improve the internal efficiencies of Heritage Western Cape and benefit the public who rely on its services across the province. The average number of permit applications averages over 2 000 annually.

†Ons 375 openbare biblioteke is die juweel in ons kroon, en ons voeg steeds nuwe biblioteke by. R1 miljoen is toegewys aan die bou van die Vleiland Modulêre Biblioteek. Vleiland is 'n plaasgemeenskap in die Laingsburg-distrik en is 65 kilometer van die naaste biblioteek geleë. Hierdie nuwe gebou sal die gemeenskap van Vleiland onder meer in staat stel om gratis

toegang tot die internet te hê as deel van ons Plattelandse Biblioteke Konnektiwiteitsprojek.

Danksy die opgradering van die Prins Albert Thusong Biblioteek sal die gemeenskap nie meer drie kilometer na die hoofbiblioteek in Prins Albert moet stap om inligting te bekom en van internetdienste gebruik te maak nie.

[Our 375 public libraries are the jewel in our crown and we still add new libraries. R1 million has been allocated to the building of the Vleiland Modular Library. Vleiland is a farming community in the Laingsburg district and is situated 65 kilometres from the nearest library. This new building will amongst others enable the community of Vleiland to have free access to the internet as part of our Rural Libraries Connectivity Project.

Due ot the upgrading of the Prince Albert Thusong Library, the community will not have to walk more than three kilometres to the main library in Prince Albert to find information and make use of the internet services.]

The current KwaMandlenkosi Public Library in Beaufort West has serious space constraints. The R1,5 million upgrade will allow for much needed study space for learners. Our e-Book lending service complements the physical book collections and other services rendered in public libraries. Patrons can access the service from the comfort and safety of their homes, 24/7. More than 17 300 titles are currently available.

2023 has shown a 66% increase in circulation, with audio-book circulation

increasing by an incredible 77%. Our public libraries will also continue to serve as a safe space for all especially through initiatives such as the Bellville Public Library or the PLOTS, People Living on the Streets Programme.

The Department will continue with the roll-out of our Oral History Project in communities, which enables residents, students and historians to now access the previously undocumented, first-hand stories of people with deep roots in their communities.

Deputy Speaker, our Archives and Records Service provides accessibility and use of archival records by South African citizens and the world at large for research purposes. To further enhance our services, we are actively exploring emerging trends in records management. We are investigating the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve information retrieval and security. Additionally, we transitioned towards cloud-based storage and accessed solutions to improve accessibility and collaboration.

Deputy Speaker, the Sports Directorate in the Department has 181 MOD Centres, 134 Neighbouring Schools, 25 Recreational Centres and 6 Multipurpose Sport Shared Facilities across the province, providing sport and recreational activities reaching more than 100 000 participants, creating approximately 650 job opportunities.

The Department has allocated R42 million towards the sustainability of the

MOD Programme including the multipurpose shared facilities.

DCAS collaborates closely with Disability Sport Western Cape to provide comprehensive support to programmes and athletes. The Disability Sport Sector is poised to deliver medals at the forthcoming Olympic Games in Paris in July this year, and the Paralympics, taking place in the same city, in August. These are of course two of the greatest highlights on the sporting calendar. In addition, the Paralympics provides hope and support to those living with disability as well as their support structures.

There has been a significant increase in funding and resources dedicated to programs targeting women and girls within the province. Furthermore, the Club Development Programme aims to bolster sport clubs in the Western Cape by providing transportation, capacity building initiatives, equipment and attire. More than 200 clubs will form part of the programme for this coming financial year. The Department allocated R14,4 million rand to sustain this programme.

†Ons gaan al meer klem plaas op die plattelandse en plaasgemeenskappe van ons geliefde provinsie, met die Plaaswerkers Sportkommissie wat die pas van hoop en selfverbetering sal aangee. Een van die moontlikhede wat DCAS in die toekoms al meer wil verken, is e-Sport. Daar is soveel potensiaal, en met 'n selfs sterker poging in hierdie verband lyk die toekoms voorwaar rooskleurig.

[We are going to put more emphasis on the rural and farming communities of

our beloved province, with the Farm Workers Sport Commission that will set the pace of hope and self improvement. One of the possibilities that the DCAS in future wants to explore more, is e-Sport. There is so much potential, and with even a stronger effort in this regard the future indeed looks rosy.]

DCAS plays a crucial role in supporting economic growth through sport and cultural events, as well as through innovation along the Cultural and Creative Industries and the Sport and Recreation industry value chains. R5 million has been allocated towards major Sports, Arts, Culture and Heritage events.

†Leidende sportgeleenthede waarin ons Departement 'n fasiliterende rol speel sluit onder meer die Twee Oseane Marathon, die Kaapstad Marathon, die Rugby Sewes, die Knysna Oesterfees, die George Sportfees, die Mosselbaai Sportfees, die Patatfees in Napier, die Hessequa Sportfees in Riversdal en die Walvis Sportfees in Hermanus in.

[Leading sport events inwhich our Department plays a facilitating role include amongst other the Two Oceans Marathon, the Cape Town Marathon, the Rugby Sevens, the Knysna Oyster Festival, the George Sport Festival, the Mossel Bay Sport Festival, the *Patatfees* in Napier, the Hessequa Sport Festival in Riversdal and the Whale Sport Festival in Hermanus.]

In 2023 the Department assisted with highly successful events including the T20 Women's Cricket World Cup, Rugby Sevens World Cup, Netball World Cup, T20 South Africa League and the Cape Town Cycle Tour. In total we

have supported 122 events thus far.

Something very close to my heart, each year the Department translates one new code of sport. We have successfully translated into isiXhosa the laws of chess, cricket, netball, boxing and cycling. We will on Africa Day 2024 launch the laws of table tennis. We will work with Tennis Western Cape to translate the laws of tennis in the next 2024/25 financial year.

Recreation in the Western Cape is thriving with 25 recreation centres offering services that create 50 job opportunities for coaches. From 1 April 2023 to 29 February 2024, these centres provided opportunities for 46 000 participants to actively participate in recreation activities.

The Mass Participation, Opportunity, Access, Development and Growth Programme continues to make a significant impact supporting 181 centres with staff and equipment reaching over 50 000 learners participating in the After-School Programme from 1 April 2023 to 31 January 2024, and creating job opportunities for 400 individuals.

The School Sport Programme continues to make a significant impact, supporting 134 Neighbouring School Centres with staff and equipment, reaching 17 460 learners, and creating job opportunities for 174 individuals. At a district level, more than 43 500 learners participated in school sport activities.

Deputy Speaker and hon members, Team Western Cape achieved first place at the South African National Schools Athletics Championship for Learners with Special Educational Needs and second place at the South African National High Schools Athletics Championship, as well as third place at the South African National Schools Swimming Championship. We achieved second place at the South African National Schools Winter Games Championship. At the South African National Schools Summer Games, we were crowned champions, successfully defending our crown.

For the 2024/25 financial year the Department allocated R48 million to Schools Sport to sustain these programmes.

DCAS runs a flagship Youth-in-Service Programme, YearBeyond. This year we plan on placing 3 000 youth in the Western Cape. This represents true hope to our young people.

Some new YearBeyond developments include the expansion of our Libraries Programme, the launch of the Little Explorers ECD Programme, placing community wellbeing champions in clinics, partnering with industry to develop a Virtual Mentorship Programme using both behavioural nudges and AI, and partnering with partners in both the social sector and industry to ensure pathways for youth post their YearBeyond experience.

The programme is amazingly successful. Of the 104 schools surveyed, not a single one wanted to end the partnership with YearBeyond, which, they said,

contributed to an improvement in learner literacy levels, learner numeracy levels, learner participation and engagement in class, learner attitudes to schoolwork, learner self-esteem and learner well-being. The same positive feedback was received from libraries, participants and corporates regarding the programme. The Department allocated R51,6 million rand towards the Youth programmes in the Western Cape.

Deputy Speaker, democracy cannot function without oversight. I wish to thank the Standing Committee for dedication and their caring. As it is the last Budget Vote of this term, I want to single them out by name: our Chairperson, hon Gillion Bosman, hon Deidre Baartman, hon Gerrit Pretorius, hon Ayanda Bans, then my old friend and opponent Mesuli Kama who has resigned and whom I miss, his replacement hon Pamela Harris; that difficult man, hon Peter Marais, and hon Ferlon Christians. I also want to thank honourable members of the EFF for their input over the years. We differ and we are opponents, but we have a very good working relationship.

I want to thank Premier Alan Winde for entrusting me with this precious portfolio. I also want to thank Team DCAS, led by our Head of Department, Mr Guy Redman, and my husband, of †*my eggenoot*, [my spouse,] Erik. I thank everyone who has made this term such a joy, such an opportunity to give hope until the morning comes to every individual in our province, and in South Africa.

I hereby table this budget.

Thank you

Enkosi kakhulu

Baie dankie.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Thank you, hon Minister. I am now going to offer the mic to the hon Harris. Please note it is the hon Harris' maiden speech. Hon Harris, there will not be any interjections. You may proceed.

Ms P C HARRIS: Good morning. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Hon Speakers, members of the House and esteemed guests. It is my singular honour to partake in this important debate on behalf of the gigantic liberation movement, the African National Congress to deliver this maiden speech, which also happens to be the last for this Administration.

As for the established convention, I understand that there must be no heckling, interjection as well as controversy in the speech. However, given that this is a budget speech, Deputy Speaker, the latter cannot be guaranteed.

Deputy Speaker, I stand before you today, not just as a representative of the ANC but as a voice for the marginalised, the neglected and the voiceless across our beautiful province to make a clarion call against the passing of a budget that falls short of meeting the needs and aspirations of our people.

The budget as it stands is deeply flawed and fails to prioritise the critical needs of our communities, particularly those in poor working class areas and rural communities. As the ANC has been consistently saying since the start of the Sixth Administration, this Department is under-funded and its ability to deliver on its mandate is hampered.

The Department's own officials have stated that they require over R1 billion to effectively fulfil their mandate, yet instead of increasing funding the Provincial Government has chosen to slash the Department's budget, particularly from the Provincial Revenue Fund and the departmental own receipts by 7,44% and 7,50%, respectively.

This increase on conditional grants could have been more if it was not for the decrease to the Social Sector Expanded Public Works Programme Incentive Grants for Provinces. As it is the case with other departments, we understand that this is because of reprioritisation of conditional grant funding towards the Presidential Employment Stimulus. With this explanation, I hope no member will attempt to shift the blame to the National Government for the failures of this Department.

Deputy Speaker, while we acknowledge that the cost of living adjustment required the Department to fund – the presentation made on the fund was challenged obviously because of COLA. We must understand that the rise in the cost of living, Government officials that obviously tirelessly work within the Department, deserve an increase in salaries. The Cost of Living

Adjustment has forced the Department to take a decision to unfund 22 posts to minimise the impact of the COLA. Despite this the Department has also gone to slash allocation to vital programs within the Department. The Department's budget has increased by 1,70% or R15,98 million from R888,290 million Revised Estimates in 2023/24 to R903,388 million in 2024/25. Both the Equitable Share and Conditional Grants increased by 2,28% and 5,49 respectively.

While we welcome this nominal increase, Deputy Speaker, it is important to note that it is insufficient to meet the growing needs of our communities. As a result of this general lack of funding, critical programmes are being cut, including interventions like Youth Programmes for Arts and Culture. This is unacceptable especially at the time when our youth are in desperate need of support and guidance.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the future of our nation lies in the hands of our youth, yet the DA Government is failing them by denying adequate resources for growth and empowerment. We mourn the lives lost, the dreams shattered and the opportunity squandered because of this neglect. Our youth deserve better. Our children deserve better investment, support and a chance to thrive, regardless of their background or postal codes. We should look around us, hon members. In the heart of our communities, in the sprawling townships and the Cape Flats where I come from and the remote corners of the rural areas, sporting facilities lie in ruins. Children filled with potential and dreams are let to play on hazardous fields, risking life and limb due to the

absence of safe spaces for recreation. Unfortunately, thousands of them end up being new recruits in the gangs that are terrorising all of us in the province. This is not by accident, but by design, and today's budget is testament to that.

On Youth Development, the Provincial Government states on its overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure:

"Access to arts, culture and sports is a fundamental right for all. Efforts continue to focus on breaking down barriers and ensuring opportunities for participation. Through infrastructure development, skills training and collaborative partnership the Department work towards creating inclusive spaces where individuals from all backgrounds can engage in cultural and sporting pursuits..."

Deputy Speaker, of course this is a blue lie. There are no efforts to break down barriers and ensure opportunities for participation. For a number of years the ANC in this House has pointed the Provincial Government to the neglect of sporting facilities in poor working class communities like Nyanga, Gugulethu, Mitchells Plain and many others, Parkwood, where facilities are dilapidated.

For many years, the ANC has asked the Department about its plans to support children of Nyanga and Khayelitsha, who are forced to play on open fields along the N2 due to the lack of sports and recreation facilities in our communities. Lest we forget about the four children who died after they were

electrocuted while playing in water at Klipfontein Mission Station in Philippi in September last year. This is a reminder to the MEC and her Department that people's lived realities in the townships and on the Cape Flats where I come from, those communities, it is not as rosy as what you picture it to be, yourselves as the DA, and that you purport to be a caring government and working for all. A caring government would have used this budget process to prioritise addressing these issues, but not this one led by the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape. I have perused the budget document looking at Infrastructure Projects of the Department, and there is nothing about sporting infrastructure and recreation, and we can see it in our own communities daily.

On youth development, the Department says it aligns itself with the Western Government's Youth Strategy, which believes that children and youth must be developed holistically, considering their physiological, spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs. I believe that this is a privilege reserved for children from affluent areas and affluent schools and not for children from the poor working-class communities, as I have already sought to explain their conditions, which are neglected by this Department.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department has allocated a measly R473,8 million over the 2024 MTEF in support of Youth Programmes. I am sure even the other hon members on the other side of the House agree with me that this is not enough. I am new in this Legislature, but I read in the media last year, the Committee Chair bragging about that the DA Government spent millions

per year on supporting youth and getting them out of drugs and crime. Of course one does not have to be a member of this House to know the Chairperson's statement is hogwash. As a member of this Committee I got a chance to ask the Department about spending and such interventions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, if you can just take your seat. I know we do not normally rise on a point of order but I will accept it. Deputy Chief Whip.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP: Chair, before I put my point of order, in terms of the Parliamentary Procedure in Commonwealth with a maiden speech, the reason we do not interrupt or heckle is because you are not being controversial. Now the member has in terms of Rule 59, reflected upon a member of this House. She specifically mentioned the Chair of the Committee. We all know who the Chair of the Committee is, and we are not allowed to reflect upon the integrity of a member of this House without bringing a substantive motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon Lekker. Thank you, put your microphone on. Is your microphone on?

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I wish to point out to the... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: One minute, members.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I wish to point out that member Pamela Harris did not reflect on any member's personality. She only spoke of an article that she read in the news. It is public knowledge, so let us not use the procedures of this House to our own detriment, because what the hon member's just done is just to raise an order that does not even rise to belong here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Can I make a ruling? Hon Bosman, is it on the same point?

Mr G BOSMAN: Yes, hon Deputy Speaker, and perhaps I can offer some assistance if the member is prepared to take a question. Just again, I was the Chairperson... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Bosman, sit down.

Mr G BOSMAN: There were two Chairpersons.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I please have all members please, hon Lekker. I am going to rule on this. If I can rule on this please, and if you will give me a moment. [Interjections.]

Hon members in the DA! Hon Sileku, hon Bosman, I am busy speaking.

Right, can I rule on this, please? I am going to let it go. I am just going to caution the hon Harris. I know that she said "the Chairperson." She did not reflect on the personal name.

Hon Harris, can I just ask, this is not about fighting you. If I can just caution you before making allegations, I know it is your maiden speech and I respect you for that, so you may proceed. Thank you.

Ms P C HARRIS: Thank you, hon Deputy Chair, let me continue, Deputy Speaker. A glance at the Budget Book clearly exposes the DA's neglect of youth in the province. There is nothing in the Department's budget, its Annual Plan, Performance Plan and Strategic Plan that speaks to addressing the social anomalies and getting youth out of gangs and drugs and we know that every day. There is no other than intervention with a set of clear indicators to measure the impact in this regard, and we see it every day. It is a lived experience. In fact, yesterday we heard how the Department of Social Development is defunding the fight to combat the scourge of Substance Use Disorder. This is an indictment against the DA Government.

Deputy Speaker, the over R473 million to be spent on Youth Development over the next three financial years will fund interventions like the Mass Opportunity and Development Centres, except for the fact that the number of MOD Centres at 181 centres across the province are not enough. The programme is a good programme which is funded by the National Government's Conditional Grant. Why is the DA Government not topping up

this Conditional Grant for expansion of the MOD Centres, especially in rural communities where there is a big shortage?

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is not just the youth who suffer, our cultural heritage, the very essence of who we are as a people, is under threat. The Budget Programme to Cultural Affairs has been slashed by 2,95%. This includes the cut to subprogrammes like Language Services, 3,53%; Museum Services, 6,75%; Arts and Culture 4,5%. Transfers to entities have also been slashed by 43,08%, including a 69,15% cut in the transfer to Heritage Western Cape. This surely will impact the industry in itself, hon Deputy Speaker.

In fact, our libraries, that happen to be the gateway to knowledge and enlightenment, while we welcome the 1,78% increase in the budget allocation for libraries and archive services, we cannot ignore the glaring gap in rural library connectivity.

Over the 2024 MTEF a total of R1,73 billion is allocated to the Department to maintain and support 377 library services points across the province. Only 232 libraries in the province have internet connectivity, while the Department acknowledges that over 40 rural libraries do not have access to the internet. There are plans to increase the number of libraries connected to the internet by only one library to 233 over the 2024 MTEF period. How can we claim to be a province that values education and progress when we leave our rural communities stranded in digital darkness? While we welcome the R4 million allocated this financial year for the purposes of replacement funding for the

burnt Beaufort West Regional Library Services, the children of Nduli in Ceres ask, what about their local library which was burned down during a housing protest in 2018? The children of Nduli have since called for the help of the South African Human Rights Commission because the officials of Witzenberg Municipality have been making empty promises about restoring the library for the past six years. The ANC calls for the budget allocation to rebuild the Nduli Library.

Deputy Speaker and esteemed members, I call on you, on all of you to rise above the partisan divides and political rhetoric and reject this budget. Our duty is not to our parties or our egos, but to the people who entrusted us with their hopes and dreams.

The ANC does not support this budget. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, the hon Harris. I now recognise the hon Peter Marais. Are you online?

Mr P J MARAIS: I am online. I have never been absent. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Marais, are you speaking?

Mr P J MARAIS: Yes. I am here. I am online.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, go ahead, please. The time has started. You

may proceed.

†Mnr P J MARAIS: Speaker, in Afrika, soos elders in die wêreld, is kultuur die vernaamste boublokke wat sosiale samebinding bevorder van gemeenskappe. Kultuur is die onblusbare vure van volk, wat volke verenig en mense 'n eie identiteit gee en die onderdrukking van een kultuur deur 'n ander kultuur het al tot brutale oorloë, verset en regeringsoornames oral in die wêreld, veral in Afrika, gelei en dit duur steeds voort in Afrika. So onderdruk die Afrikaanse-, Griekwa- en Khoi-kulture, en wees gewaarsku! Ons is besig om die saad vir geweldige verset te saai.

Wat is die waarde van 'n biblioteek as kinders op skool nie eers behoorlik kan lees nie? Dit is geldmors. Die leeskultuur is dood, nie net hier nie, maar wêreldwyd.

Google, TikTok, Facebook en ander sosiale media is die nuwe biblioteek vir jongmense. Ek wil weet wat doen ons daaromtrent? Ek het klagtes ontvang van die Griekwa Koningshuis. Hul voel benadeel. Hulle makeer kantore. Hulle makeer geriewe waar hulle vir binnelanders en buitelanders hulle kultuur, kuns en dans kan vertoon, maar dit bestaan nie. Dit bestaan nie. Die Khoi-mense kla ook. Hulle sê dat die Departement van Kuns en Kultuur word beskryf as nie-objektief in hulle besluite jeens die Griekwa en ander Khoi-stamme.

Mr P J MARAIS: Speaker, in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, culture is one o/f the main building blocks that promotes social cohesion of communities.

[Culture is the inextinguishable fires of nations that unite nations and give people an own identity and the suppression of one culture by another has led to brutal wars, resistance and coup d'états all over the world, especially in Africa, and it still continues in Africa. So suppress the Afrikaans, Griqua and Khoi cultures, and be warned! We are busy sowing the seeds for great resistance.

What is the value of a library if children at school cannot even read properly? It's a waste of money. The reading culture is dead, not just here, but all over the world.

Google, TikTok, Facebook and other social media are the new library for the youth. I want to know what we are doing about it? I have received complaints from the Griqua Royal House. They feel neglected. They lack offices. They lack facilities where they can showcase their culture, art and dance to local people and foreigners, but it does not exist. It does not exist. The Khoi people are also complaining. They say that the Department of Art and Culture is described as non-objective in their decisions about the Griqua and other Khoi tribes.]

Let us adopt policies and devise strategies in this Province to stop the cultural smothering and invasion by English. Our responsibility is equally...
[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Marais.

Mr P J MARAIS: It should be equal to the isiXhosa, Afrikaans, and English. Western Cape demographics should be the yardstick, not national demographics.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Marais. Your time is up. Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon Bosman.

Mr G BOSMAN: Madam Speaker, the Dutch Consul-General, Ms Helene Rekkers, Alderman Johannes van der Merwe, Chairperson Subcouncil 21, the Subcouncil, that I am glad to be the constituency of. The Arts, Cultural Affairs and Sports are not just pastimes. They are the heartbeats of a society, reflecting its values, passions and aspirations. They unite us in celebration and they teach us resilience in defeat and inspire us to strive for greatness.

I stand before this House today to celebrate the vibrant cultural tapestry of the Western Cape, a tapestry woven by talented artists like we saw in the concourse, athletes and passionate communities that call this province their home. This vibrancy is not accidental. It is the direct result of the Democratic Alliance's unwavering commitment to Cultural Affairs and Sport. The Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport has seen a steady increase in its budget, reflecting our commitment to the sector. The 2024/25 MTEF Budget allocation stands at a whopping R2,785 billion. This is in stark contrast to the stagnation and decline seen under the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. Our investments are reaping the rewards. The

Western Cape has become a magnet for major events. We have successfully hosted the likes of the Netball World Cup, the Formula E, the Cape Town Cycle Tour and, in a week's time, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival. These events not only bring tourism revenue and economic stimulus, but also showcase our province's cultural and sporting prowess on a global stage.

Let us not forget that 19 out of the 33 Springbok World Cup winning squad have deep rooted connection to rugby development in the Western Cape. Let us not forget that an AFCON award-winning women's soccer coach, Ms Desiree Ellis, calls the Western Cape her home.

Speaker, Deputy Speaker, a massive R136 million will be spent on the Arts over the 2024/25 MTEF, but our commitment goes beyond funding the glamour of major events. We understand the importance of nurturing our local talent and nurturing the institutions that build those talents. DCAS provides crucial support to Community Art Centres, Museums and Libraries. We have invested in programmes that provide opportunities for young artists to develop their talents such as the Artists in School Programme where we provide job opportunities for artists, arts training for teachers and access to structured art programmes that are aligned to an approved arts curriculum. An example in point is the Butterfly Art in the Capricorn Vrygrond area.

Also the Western Cape Community Arts Centre Strategy supports and strengthens Community Art Centres and affiliated Community Arts Organisations through capacity building, supporting community arts

development and arts infrastructure refurbishments.

Two weeks ago, I was at the Zabalaza Theatre Festival at the Baxter Theatre, where the Department shows that it continues to support and ensure that community-based theatre practitioners can perfect their craft, create new audiences through delivering riveting theatre that speaks to the social challenges in our communities.

Over the 2024/25 MTEF 45 projects will also be completed to develop and promote arts and culture in the province and 195 arts and culture organisations, individuals and companies will be supported through grant and aid funding.

Strengthened community arts development will continue to contribute towards community wellness, safer environments and personal development, and this will build a stronger social fabric in our working class communities. I am encouraged that Ms Cecilia Sani, the Director for Library Services, made a commitment in our last meeting that the Department will look at establishing a Western Cape Library for theatre, plays and poetry.

With that, through you, hon Speaker, I would like to gift Minister Marais as a contribution to this library, a signed copy of *Pass Me a Meatball* published in 1977 by a Cape Town legend, Dr James Matthews.

A prime example of success in the arts is last week's Fleur Du Cap Theatre

Awards. This prestigious awards ceremony, also known as the Oscars of the Theatre World in the Western Cape, held a ceremony that celebrates excellence in South African Theatre.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and acknowledge the phenomenal provincial and national talent that was recognised at the 2024 awards.

Their dedication and artistry are shining examples of the flourishing cultural scene in the Western Cape. Thank you to the Chairperson of the Fleur Du Cap judging panel, Mr Africa Melane, the CEO of the Baxter Theatre, Ms Lara Foot, and Mr Fahiem Stellenboom for hosting the arts community at the Oscars of the Arts in Cape Town last weekend. They highlighted amazing theatre and talent practitioners, some of whom are in the gallery today.

Furthermore, when it comes to Archive Services, we are hopeful that the Department will get the planned upgrades re archives. This enhancement is crucial for optimizing the management of our lived history. Ensuring efficient retrieval of information and, as you know, members of the Committee who went to the Archives Tour that we did, we host both the Archives for the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape Provinces.

Speaker, Deputy Speaker, although this Provincial Department is doing everything it can to promote Cultural Affairs and Sport, I am sad to see that the National Department continues to fail our artists and athletes. The

National Department of Sport, Art and Culture is riddled with mismanagement and indifference. Funding for the arts is slashed. Community programmes are neglected and iconic institutions are left to decay.

This neglect stifles the very essence of our nation's soul, our creativity, our heritage and our sense of identity. While the Western Cape Government will be spending billions over the next few years on improving arts and culture and sports in the Western Cape, the National ANC-run Department of Sport, Arts and Culture will be spending billions on changing the names of towns and roads during this time of national austerity. Our National Government has just gazetted millions and millions in name changes that could have been done a lot cheaper.

The Western Cape stands as a beacon of hope, a testament to what can be achieved when a government prioritises and invests in cultural affairs and sport. We will continue advocating for even greater funding and investment into this Department, ensuring that every artist, athlete and cultural institution have the resources they need to thrive. We will continue fostering collaboration between Government, cultural institutions and the private sector, as well as our communities to create a vibrant ecosystem that supports artistic expression and sporting excellence. We will also continue to shine as a national model and we will share our model of success with the other provinces and I am hopeful, hon Deputy Speaker, we will inspire a national revival of arts and culture when we take up our seats in the Union Buildings.

This Department, hon Deputy Speaker, is not only successful on its own, it is effective through the partnerships with theatres in the Metro, in our rural areas and in our communities across the province.

I want to specifically thank Dr Marlene le Roux, the Chief Executive Officer of the Artscape Theatre, a theatre complex that is at the heartbeat of the Performing Arts' sector in this province. Dr le Roux is also the Chairperson of the Chrysalis Academy, one of the most effective youth development institutions in our provincial arsenal to develop young people. Her commitment to the development of the arts and ensuring access for all, through creating universal access for people living with disabilities, is a project that she executed in partnership with the Western Cape Government through the Department of Infrastructure.

Hon Speaker, through you, I would like to thank Dr Le Roux for her mentorship and for teaching me to be an activist, first and foremost. Our journey is a personal one, one where she has acted as a wise mother and a mentor since my teenage years.

Speaker, this has shown through the partnerships that we have with municipalities across the province, municipalities who are the custodians of sporting infrastructure and who get a grant from this Provincial Government to build sporting infrastructure. So if the honourable members opposite me would like to go and peruse the municipal budgets, they will find those expenditures there.

My special thanks goes out to all municipalities that have collaborated with this Department, especially those local authorities that spend allocated money correctly and not those that lock out the chief librarians as we have seen on oversight. A very special thank you goes out to the Mayoral Committee member responsible for Community Services and Health in the City of Cape Town, councillor Patricia Van der Ross, and the entire Council of Cape Town, represented by Alderman Van der Merwe for also topping up where they can.

Speaker, I think we can all agree that Minister Anroux Marais has made an indelible contribution to the Arts and Culture sector in this province. Minister Marais, through you, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for your collaboration with the Standing Committee and the open-door policy that you have enabled for all members, even those you invite to boxing matches who have now taken up their seats in civil society.

Deputy Speaker, through you I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Head of Department, Mr Guy Redman for his collaborative approach to the work of the Committee. Thank you, HOD, to you and your entire team for always ensuring that members of the Committee are invited to see and to celebrate with the sport people and the artists from this province when the Department honours them annually.

Speaker, I would like to also take this opportunity, Deputy Speaker, to thank

the staff of the Provincial Parliament, specifically the teams in logistics services, singling out Mr Anwille Barends for always ensuring that our Committee arrived safely at our oversight events.

To the Public Education and Outreach Unit for their collaboration on public hearings, to Ms Miriam Stuurman in the Library for always making sure that we are well equipped with the correct research and that the library is an open resource for members. I want to highlight and single out Mr Waseem Matthews, our amazing and dedicated Procedural Officer. We appreciate your hard work and we value your work.

Through you, hon Speaker, to the new hon Harris, there were two Chairs in the Standing Committee on Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport, now known as the Standing Committee on Police Oversight, Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport. Like there were many, many, many members of the ANC on that Committee, there were two Chairs.

Speaker, I want to thank the dedicated members of our Committee, the many that we have had. Many of them have become friends or some of them, as they call themselves, have become "frenemies" who do not want to be our friends, but your commitment as members of the Committee, your commitment to not just Sport, Arts and Culture has come through when we were able to leave our political hats outside the committees, and we debate the issues that affect our community. Your commitment to your constituencies has ensured that we do meaningful oversight. I want to

celebrate and thank you and I will follow the Minister's example and say to the former Chairperson, now Minister Reagan Allen, you are a tough act to follow and a funny man.

Member Baartman, your commitment to the development of the young people in Beaufort West and Laingsburg is inspiring.

Member Bans, my friend, you are a champion and passionate, passionate advocate for the work of young people and the people of Beaufort West. I appreciate you and I look forward to seeing you on the front benches next term.

Member Windvogel, my frenemy, we have had our differences, but you have showed us that the rural women of the Western Cape must always be included and I appreciate you.

To member Marais, and I was about to say, member Marais, because we always get member Murray, hon Marais, the Minister, and Mr Peter Marais confused. Although, hon Marais, we disagree on many points and we have very different ideological outlooks, I want to say that I appreciate your eager and kind wise counsel and for always fighting for the indigenous people of the Western Cape and the preservation of the Afrikaans language. You have been here the longest and we wish you well in your retirement, if you choose to retire or come back.

Member Kama who is unfortunately no longer part of this House, member Kama, through the honourable Deputy Speaker, thank you for being a friend and for always doing your best to hold the Cultural Affairs and Sport Committee accountable, even when they swapped you around countless times. I want to also, Deputy Speaker, thank the late, hon Botha, a friend, a mentor and one of the most passionate advocates for rural women. I want to give thanks to hon Botha for guiding this Committee through turbulent times sometimes.

Member Christians, member Alan would remember, there was a former Minister and member Christians who banged tables at one of our first Committee meetings when I arrived here. Member Botha put that to a stop with one simple look and it ended.

Speaker, Deputy Speaker, through you, I want to give a special thanks to Ms Ashlyn Appollis, a former researcher in the WCPP, and now working in the Mayco Members Office in the City of Cape Town, extending the work that she has done supporting me and supporting this Committee, when I arrived, very green, very eager and a little too excited on the Fifth Floor of the WCPP.

Speaker, you know. I was told recently during a conversation with a good American politician, a very famous American politician. We often, as politicians, do not highlight our speech writers, our researchers and our staff enough, and I want to thank the people who make sure that we are always

well prepared and always make me look good.

My research intern, Ms Litha Mzinyati, thank you for your hard work and dedication to the DCAS portfolio and to Mr Anton van Zyl, sitting up there, my former DCAS researcher who I can call on any a day to look at something, to attend an event and to make sure that communities are represented. We appreciate and value you.

Honourable Speaker, I got the "thank you's" out of the way because, I believe that, as politicians, we are entitled to our own opinions but we are not entitled to our own facts and we must always be honest with our communities, because those are the people we are here to serve.

As a young man, through you, hon Speaker, to member Harris, from a poor working class community, I am grateful for the programmes and support of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. I wish that one day we will have a National Government that is able to mainstream arts, culture and sport instead of channelling youth development through the arts to a presidential stimulus project because we know when you have to stimulate something, it means the Line Department and the Minister has failed. Maybe a performance agreement signed when the person takes the job, after the next election or before, would help the President to determine what the key priorities are, because this sector has suffered and we must acknowledge that during COVID this sector suffered more than others, We had artists who died languishing in poverty because the National Government Institutions could

not pay grants in time.

Hon Speaker, I am dismayed that national grants were cut and the Provincial Government gets blamed. I am dismayed, because we have read the Blue Book, page 696. We understand that when we have read the Strategic Plan that the Department has so creatively put even in little sidebars, that the DCAS, as a Department, has allocated more than R473 million over the 2024 MTEF for Youth Programmes. This Department is pioneering Youth Development in the Programme.

Member Harris, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, when you arrived two weeks ago for our budget debate, Ms Jackie Boulle told the Committee that the Department is in the process of evaluating all Youth Development Programmes for efficacy and improvement, and I invite you in your next term, to stay on our Committee so that you can help shape what those programmes must look like because it is important that when we criticize, we also offer solutions which I am glad you did today, ma'am.

I really want to say to the colleagues opposite me, this role requires to be collaborative. It requires you to read more than just the budget, but to peruse documents outside of the Department as well. The archives are open for anybody. It is open every day.

Through you, honourable Speaker, I want to just again highlight that the newspapers were wrong. As I said now the Department spent more than

R473 million on youth development, so maybe if I can send you that parliamentary question, through you, hon Speaker, we can help Ms Harris to prepare for her next budget speech.

For those of us who regularly visit Beaufort West and I can tell you I have been to Beaufort West more times than any other place in this province besides Kannaland. The libraries in Beaufort West are open – libraries in plural. The people of Beaufort West are excited. The young people of Beaufort West are at Chrysalis. The young people of Beaufort West are at Stellenbosch, studying to become teachers. When we go there they tell us: "We have stumbling blocks. We are forgotten. Our Government, Local Government hates us, but we are here."

We will see later this month at the Suidoosterfees, a young, vibrant theatre group from Beaufort West at the Artscape. Please do join us.

Speaker, I have to conclude because it is early and we left quite late last night and I do want members to get on the road for all the canvassing and Easter eggs that we have to hand out, but I want to ask members that as you enjoy Easter and as you campaign, look at what theatre productions are happening. Look at what community festivals are happening and try to attend. What we saw this afternoon in the lobby, as well as downstairs is just a small taste of what is happening in our communities every weekend.

The arts is restorative, it helps us relax, and it inspires creativity and every

time when you attend a performance, look out for the DCAS banner. Look out for Ms Carol van Wyk, one of the Departmental officials. Look out for Dr Marlene le Roux. Look out for the City of Cape Town or the local authorities' logo because you will see it there.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, the Western Cape offers a compelling alternative. It is a narrative that we have carefully developed by collating our key priorities, Jobs, Safety, Growth. Jobs, Safety, Growth, and DCAS does that. It creates employment opportunities, whether it is through YearBeyond or whether it is through formal jobs in the theatre and sporting sector. DCAS provides safe spaces through after-school programmes, through choral music programmes, as the Minister highlighted earlier and DCAS also grows the economy through festivals and through the theatre productions.

Speaker, I cannot tell you how many people have messaged me this week to ask: "Can you get me into Mamma Mia?" People want to be in the theatres, but we need to get to a position where we are able to create enough jobs so that people can buy tickets to go and see, not just the big productions, but also our community productions.

We are a province, Deputy Speaker, that cherishes creativity. We are a province with a sporting spirit and a cultural heritage that is internationally known. We are a province that invests in its people and reaps the rewards in a thriving culture and sport landscape. Let us all join hands and ensure that the Western Cape remains the crown jewel of South Africa in terms of Arts,

Culture and Sport.

On behalf of the Democratic Alliance, I support Vote 13. Cultural Affairs and Sport and I invite all honourable members to do the same. I thank you.

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

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. †Baie dankie vir elkeen se bydrae. U weet, ons dink altyd dat Sport en Kultuur is maar sommer net so 'n *wishy-washy* Departement. [Thank you for everyone's contribution. You know, we always think Sport and Culture is just a wishy-washy Department.] But we are the fabric of South Africa.

First of all I want to mention – what I have neglected to say is that, Jabaar got a SAFTA, a South African Film and Television Award for the best disabilities producer and TV presenter in South Africa – all the way from the Western Cape. Congratulations again!

Then I want to mention, †baie dankie, agbare Gillion Bosman, vir jou altyd eerlike en konstruktiewe oorsig en ondersteuning en ek wil vir jou sê, dit was jy vandag genoem het weet ek kom uit jou hart uit en baie, baie dankie vir daai ondersteuning en daai geweldige oorsig wat jy oor ons gehad het. Ek weet nie of almal verstaan nie, dat die Staande Komitee het oorsig oor die

Minister en die Departement en dankie dat jy ons op ons tone gehou het saam met die Staande Komitee. Baie dankie daarvoor. [thank you, hon Gillion Bosman, for your always honest and constructive oversight and support and I want to say to you, that which you mentioned today comes from your heart and thank you very very much for that support and that large oversight that you had over us. I don't know if everybody understands, that the Standing Committee has oversight over the Minister and the Department and thank you that you kept us on our toes along with the Standing Committee. Thank you for that.]

†Dan wil ek sê aan agbare Peter Marais. [Then I want to say to hon Peter Marais.] The Khoi and Griquas Culture Councils account for 25 of the 35 councils registered with the Western Cape Culture Committee. In 2023/24 we invited applications for funding support from the registered Culture Councils. We received only nine applications and we supported all nine and the priority of our funding is to ensure the sustainability of culture, programmes and activities as well as to support development initiatives. We strive to support projects that are beneficial to all cultures and that promote social cohesion and integration.

†Dan wil ek net noem. [Then I just want to mention.] The Department regards the Tussen die Riviere as a crucial element of building a socially inclusive Western Cape, and we use this intervention as a catalyst to build the relationships and mutual respect between different communities in the region.

†En verder wil ek net noem, baie dankie, agbare Harris. Ek weet dit is u nooienstoespraak en ons moenie eintlik daarop negatiewe kommentaar lewer of kommentaar lewer nie, [And further I just want to mention, thank you, hon Harris. I know it's your maiden speech and should not really have negative commentary or comment on it,] but I have to say that one thing that I agree with you. This Department is unfunded and, as you mentioned, the situation is worsened by the in-year budget cuts by the inept ANC Government, which our Government is rightly challenging.

Then also the wage increases were not funded by National Treasury. We had to find R27 million to absorb the wage increase from the Province, not from National, and fiscal consolidation was implemented by the National Government, as I mentioned, which resulted in budget decline and it was devastating but we rose above that and we can continue with our programmes. Then, Schedule 5 of the Constitution of 1996 has placed municipalities in the mandate The Department only assists with upgrading or construction of infrastructure / sport infrastructure in our areas.

And then the Youth MOD Programme, as we said, is also not funded by the National Grants, but funded by the Province.

Libraries as a safe space: our libraries play a very important, as we know, role of providing safe spaces in our communities. For an unemployed the library provides free computers with internet access to search for

employment and apply for jobs. For homeless patrons a library provides shelter from the elements. For the bullied it provides a sanctuary. For recovering addicts it provides resources, activities in a substance-free environment, and for parents and children it provides a space where children are monitored and safe.

Then, internet access of public libraries: 333 provide free internet access; 232 through the Department of Rural Library Connectivity Project and 101 through the City of Cape Town's SmartCape. Of the 42 that do not currently provide free internet access, 13 are service points in Correctional Services, which does not allow internet services. Of the remaining 29, many of these either do not have adequate space, security or network infrastructure, and then the last on libraries, I think I have said everything about the libraries.

Then there was some mention about what happens to the youth who were in a programme in 2023 that have exited the programme. Two thirds have already secured their next opportunity and wants that continued to be supported, to secure their next opportunity.

I also want to mention that from the Rural Programme, 55% of our programme, Sport Programmes, has rural impact. School sport, 57% is rural. The MOD program, 47% is rural. Recreation, 60% is rural; and Shared Facilities, 60% is also rural and I think that is more or less the most that you have mentioned that is a challenge.

†Dan ter afsluiting, Deputy Speaker, en agbare lede. [Then in conclusion, Deputy Speaker and hon members.]

Every member of team DCAS is a purifier of hope. That is what we deal in. I thank each and every participant in this debate today and every member of the public in the gallery.

As Eddie Grant showed us in "Give me hope, Jo-Anna", let us give hope, hope until the morning comes.

Dankie. Thank you. Enkosi.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister Marais. That concludes the debate on this Vote. I will just give a moment for our guests to leave the Chamber, should they so wish, but we will not break, so we will continue to go on ahead. Just give us some minutes. Thank you very much.

[Business of the House paused for clearing of the bays.]+

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, if we can take our seats, please. Thank you very much and thank you for the beautiful music. Thank you so much.

Alright. We are now moving on, I will ask – okay, I will ask the Secretary to read the second Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 6: Health and Wellness – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2024]

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

The MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Deputy Speaker, Speaker, the Premier, in absentia, my colleagues, Cabinet Ministers, my colleagues in the House, the Leader of the Opposition and everyone, members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, the Department officials, some of them that might be online. Thank you very much, members of the media and specifically the residents of the Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this House first on a history lesson and begin my speech by speaking to the Pantheon, the iconic landmark in Rome. Built nearly two millennia ago, the Pantheon stands as a marvel of architectural achievement. Commissioned by Marcus Agrippa in 27 BC and later rebuilt by the Emperor Hadrian around 126 AD.

The Pantheon was dedicated to the worship of the Roman gods, but what sets the Pantheon apart from other ancient structures is not just its grandeur or its historical significance; it is the remarkable fact that this architectural masterpiece has endured the passage of time. The secret to the Pantheon's longevity lies in its construction, particularly the innovative use of Roman

concrete. Unlike the modern concrete, which needs consistent repairs, this ancient building material composed of lime, volcanic ash and aggregate proved to be a game changer in the realm of architecture. The Pantheon's iconic dome, one of the largest of its kind in the world, owes its strength and durability to its remarkable material. Built without the use of modern reinforcement techniques, the dome stands as a testament to the resilience and engineering prowess of ancient Rome.

Many ancient structures around the world, Deputy Speaker, like the Temple of Luxor in Egypt, like the Taj Mahal in India, or the Great Mosque of Djenné in Mali, has stood for hundreds, if not thousands of years due to the way they were built.

Like these buildings, Deputy Speaker, the endurance and reputation of the Western Cape Health System is not by accident, it is by design. We invested and we put effort into it. The crux, Deputy Speaker, is to strengthen the whole system. Each block, the World Health Organisation talks about the Health System is made of Health Systems. Those blocks include, they are Leadership and Governance; the Human Resources is a system; Health Information, a system; Health Financing, a system; the Access to Medicines and other Pharmaceutical Products is a system, and the service delivery that you provide – they are part of the system that are being influenced by all of these building blocks.

For years, Deputy Speaker, we have invested in our foundations, ensured that

our facilities and management teams are composed of quality people and assets and that our organisation is structured optimally to face the current demands of a modern world requiring to strengthen all the building blocks, but that does not mean that we are operating in a perfect world, Deputy Speaker, where our Department is operating perfectly.

Like the Pantheon, hon Speaker, we have endured countless crises, talking about the crises, the polycrisis. For the past years the Western Cape and more broadly the whole world had to encounter and internalise several shocks on multiple fronts. For Health and Wellness these include climate related events such as the droughts, the fires, the floods, the disease outbreaks like the COVID. We have grappled with the geographical ramifications of conflicts in region like the Ukraine, the Gaza, the Sudan, which have had far-reaching economic implications.

Social instability characterised by instances of social unrest, the taxi violence and rising cost of living, have further compounded our challenges. Technological threats such as cyber attacks and risk associated with artificial intelligence have been added to our concerns.

Moreover, Deputy Speaker, the persistent issue of loadshedding has underscored the fragility of our energy supply while economic downturns and fiscal risk have posed significant hurdles to our prosperity. The South African triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality and other socio-economic political and commercial determinants of health impact on

us.

Hon Deputy Speaker, while our Department is being stretched thin in these circumstances we cannot and have not remained idle in such circumstances. We do communicate, engage and engage constantly with our stakeholders from private, organised labour, that is the Unions, civil society, communities and recently we have hosted a multi-sectoral engagement with Local Government and also our statutory bodies in order to contextualise the challenges facing us, and also we spoke to how these will be mitigated going forward as part of the campaign of the unzipping the Western Cape Health purse.

Out of all Clinic Committees and Hospital Boards 94% are constituted across the province and, Deputy Speaker, we will be taking the conversation at ward levels so that communities know how the upcoming budget period will affect their respective facilities.

Deputy Speaker, I want to speak up about the built environment. Investment into critical infrastructure has been a key priority for Health and Wellness. Over the past five years one of our primary focuses has been to ensure that our infrastructure remains *morem*, safe to use and effective in rendering health services to communities. Currently our projects include – there are many – include the renovations and rehabilitations at Stellenbosch Hospital, the fire compliance measures at Worcester Hospital, the construction of the new Ladysmith Clinic, the new Obstetric Theatre in Paarl Hospital's

Maternity Unit, the construction of four brand new Acute Psychiatry Units at Khayelitsha, Eerste River, New Somerset and Caledon Hospitals. The brand-new Acute Psychiatry Units will alleviate the pressure on our Health Hospital Platform because we do not all have to focus on the beds in the specialised hospital, but also we have to create these psychiatric units just to showcase that mental health does matter. In total these projects, these ones, equate to about R279 million.

The replacement of Villiersdorp EMS Station, the upgrade and additions being made to the Bothasig CDC, it is just one of many examples. Additionally, Deputy Speaker, our Health Technology Projects include a total of 117 projects currently in planning; 40 are in the procurement stage, nine were already being commissioned and 31 that are already in the exit-evaluation stage.

We also, Deputy Speaker, have what we call the Face of Government Projects, which we have now increased these to 520 interventions. The committed budget now being close to about R30 million which at this stage we have already made use of about 30% of our budget.

These resources are being used like to fix windows, install the *dakke* or the shelters for patients waiting queues and improve also the appearance of our facilities, because the front house is important.

Earlier this year I have opened the R34 million Knysna Forensic Pathology

Lab. The new facility has resulted in improving service delivery by offering improved medico-legal support to investigations for the justice system and also improve a dignified public experience with an appropriate public interface and bereavement space, as well as an overall improved staff morale.

In a few months' time, Speaker, I will be officially opening the Observatory, which is in Salt River, the Forensic Pathology Institute, which is about the value of R300 million and can also accommodate more than 400 bodies that are there, but the details will happen when I am opening it.

Deputy Speaker, recently I inspected the Tygerberg Central Laundry which received a total renovation of R137 million which includes three washing units which allows it to cater for 64 health facilities in the Metro and also in the entire Cape Winelands. This also contributes and also reduces carbon emissions, those washing units, which is actually what is supposed to happen in terms of contributing positively towards the climate change and energy renewals.

Speaking about, Tygerberg, Speaker, our commitment to the new Tygerberg Tertiary and also to the Belhar Regional Hospitals still remain resolute. Two of those projects, and you add Klipfontein / G F Jooste Hospital, these are the projects that are worth more than R16 billion and will greatly capacitate our Level 2 and Level 3 platforms in the Western Cape.

In terms of the Belhar Hospital, Regional Hospital specifically, work has

since commenced with a project briefing. It was done on 30 October 2023 and now we are having conversations with the City of Cape Town to secure assistance in order specifically to relocate and redirect the sewer lines that are installed there for a neighbouring housing development in order for the project to continue. That is for the Belhar.

From this we have also created a joint task team in order to streamline the administrative processes going forward, so that these three hospitals that will be built in the Metro we could be able to fast-track. Again, I repeat they, the three of them cost about R16 billion.

On the Klipfontein Regional Hospital, hon Speaker, otherwise known as G F Jooste, the concept design has been in progress with the consultants working with the site development plan and layouts. We anticipate this to be completed by August of 2024.

On Energy Resilience, hon Speaker, I have made it very clear that healthcare services cannot be switched on and off like a light bulb. Lives quite literally depend on a steady supply of electricity. In addition to maintaining 185 generators at our large facility we have installed 47 inverters at Rural Clinics and we will continue to roll out this programme into the future. This means that even in our most distant communities our healthcare facilities still have electricity. In an effort to be greener and more cost effective, thirteen of our hospitals will receive solar panels this year, while our hospitals have generators, all of them. The solar panels will save our facilities from having

to spend millions and millions of rands every month on diesel and this will free up resources for where they are needed most. This project has been allocated about R73 million over the next two years.

Now going to the other issue, Deputy Speaker, on social determinants of health. One of the most impactful factors is that of a crime. Two years ago the Premier made announcements on a Violence Prevention Unit that will be established in the Department of Health and Wellness. Following my previous budget speeches, the VPU have been capacitated and is providing safety stakeholders both in Government and civil society, with these tailored evidence-based interventions for their communities based on using the local data and also trends in those areas.

Now the progress, Speaker, 12 VPU coordinators, Violence Prevention Unit coordinators across the area, 18 area-based teams are working in those areas with the stakeholders. There will be more, although there are 18 but there are those that are still yet to be launched, and they are working with these stakeholders across the province, across the district. This commitment will continue to expand specifically with nearly R94 million being spent on VPU in terms of District Health Services over the MTEF.

Speaker, Health needs to be considerably evolving in order to provide the right care to our patients. Now I want to talk about the Telehealth Innovations, and we need to stay abreast with the constant development of technology.

One such example which has been mentioned over and over, I think it started from the Premier, that our Tele-ICU Robot in George which connects specialists in Groote Schuur with doctors in George without having to transport patients or clinicians more than 400 kilometres for a consultation, is one of those that we can brag about. We are the only one in the country by the way, but that is not the only innovation we have. We are the only Health Department to be licensed by the South African Civil Aviation Authority to operate drones by the EMS which are used in our search and rescue operations. This allows for quicker findings in inaccessible areas where other vehicles would have been used. We currently have got five drones across the province that are saving lives on a daily basis.

Of course the Da Vinci Robotic Surgery Systems have continued to perform and have conducted more than 530 surgeries since their commissioning. These are just a few examples, Speaker. We have got some that include the cutting-edge operations, the transplants, and all of those in our three universities, but more details you can get on the website. We came up with a video so that people could be able to see this.

Speaker, the Transitional Care Facility is part of the service redesign post-COVID. We introduce Transitional Care as part of our service redesign to reduce service pressures from our Acute Hospital Platform. Facilities such as Brackengate have now been transformed into transitional care facilities. This means that medical stable patients who are unable to be discharged

from, but do not require acute care, will be able, could be able to fully recuperate without congesting the Hospital Platform.

This sub-acute and step down in chronic medical hospitals will get an allocation of R469 million in order to expand our Transitional Care Platform.

Speaker, now I want to talk briefly about our staff, the heartbeat of the Health system. No staff, no health services. Through you, Speaker, the hon member Gerrit Pretorius recently, actually he always reminds us that, I quote: “State-of-the-art facilities mean nothing without the state-of-the-art staff”, and I cannot agree more to that. Here in our province we are investing in our own timber and producing quality healthcare professionals. R65,3 million has been allocated for the bursaries with R204 million also being used to training our officials in the Department. We have got the Western Cape College of Nursing, Speaker, the only Public Nursing College in South Africa to offer a Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing, as well as the postgraduate diploma courses. These are otherwise mostly offered in private institutions, like the universities as well, which proves how our college is creating quality healthcare staff and specialists. Through approval from the Nursing Council we also now, with the diplomas we are offering, offer seven disciplined specialty programmes within the diplomas, the peri-operative nursing, the critical nursing, mental health nursing, trauma and emergency nursing, midwifery, primary care, orthopaedics. The graduates from these programmes then would be able to be allowed to be registered as nurse and midwife specialists.

The Western Cape, Speaker, our second college is the College of Emergency Care, which some may say is Paramedics or the Ambulances Emergency Care, has also been accredited by the Council of Higher Education. It is accredited by the Health Professional Council of South Africa and now holds and could be able to provide a SAQA Certificate, to provide undergraduate emergency medical training. This college currently provides a higher certificate on Emergency Care at NQF Level 5, and is awaiting accreditation to offer the diploma in Emergency Medical Care and Bachelor's Degree. That is the only college in South Africa in emergency care that does that.

Going forward, Speaker, as I conclude this speech, we are in a period of course of business unusual. For us in health we adopt that Health is Everybody's Business", we still have to continue with that. While that may be the case you must also use our successes to buffer us going forward.

As I mentioned, Speaker, we have introduced the cutting edge technologies like the Robotic Surgeries; the Telehealth Initiative; the Tele-ICU; the Dashboard; the Unique Patient Identifier; the Hospital Emergency Information System. These are all part of making our services more efficient under the circumstances of the reduced resources and the budget cuts, and (b), Speaker, that the budget cuts, it is only the Western Cape and also Gauteng where last year their budgets had to be cut in terms of the Equitable Share where the National Treasury was using the equitable resource allocation.

Our efforts towards service redesign have equally put us in good stead particularly for example the community orientated primary care in relation to creating Hospitals without Walls, Healthcare On Wheels, the Wellness Hub, we have to do something differently because there is no money. The country does not have the money. The polycrisis, but more specifically the South African fiscal cliff and also the triple challenges we have, they are impacting the Department, we incentivise even more to put in the necessary changes for us to quickly achieve Universal Health Coverage. It is a must to have, to go towards Universal Health Coverage and also improve our human development index outcomes which the Department is focusing on that aspect as well, but we cannot only focus on the present. We have to focus on the future e.g. on the impact on the climate change and so forth.

The Department has already joined, for example, the Global Green and Health Hospitals, which is an international network of more than 68 000 hospitals, healthcare facilities, health system and healthcare organisations dedicated to reducing the environmental footprint and promoting public environmental health. To date we have won many awards, I think two for Climate Change. We have won one for Climate Change Resilience and also Leadership in the Greenhouse Reduction. This is in addition to many other awards which I have mentioned here previously because I do not want to plagiarise myself in the previous speeches.

This is Healthcare without Harm, Speaker, this Green Hospital Global Green,

and what we also are busy with is what we call the One Health where we are striving to ensure that we do not only look at the health of the humans, but also the health of the plants and the health of the animals, because all of these impacts on health, I mean, as well. Also, Speaker, with the challenges that we have, we have to show that we work with all others and also the system has to keep on evolving like the ecosystem that we adopt as part of the service redesign, but also to do things differently as we move the times and working with everyone, leaving no-one behind.

Having said that, Speaker, now I want to table the budget. I have the honour of tabling the Budget of 2024/25 for the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness amounting to R30,489 billion.

In comparison to the Revised Estimate of 2023/24, Speaker, this represents an overall nominal – nominal – nominal increase of R658,32 million or 2,21 in terms of the increase – a nominal increase. The increase, this sounds substantial and may seem like an additional allocation that remedies the constrained fiscal climate every department is facing. The principles and assumptions for the allocations are based on the compensation of the employees, Speaker. This does not consider this aspect of the inflation.

The inflator for CoE has been reduced by approximately 2,73% and translates to around about 1 300 fewer headcounts, because there is no money.

For goods and services all inflators have been reduced to zero percent. These

are the principles. When accounting for the increases in the prices of electricity we do not get additional money for the electricity, no grant for such for the food. I made an example of how the wars impact on the food prices, the oils and everything, the wheat, the transport as well as critical goods and services. This means that our budget for such items will face immense pressure over this financial year. The other principle, Speaker, for transfer and subsidies, payment for capital assets and service expansion, there has been no allocation for the inflation for over the next three years.

†Ayikho imali. [There is no money.]

The Health Sector Budget, actually the allocation of this budget to the Health Sector in total, you will find that there has not been any improvement in terms of the National Treasury putting money on the Health Sector on its totality. I feel sorry for the next National Health Minister.

The projected shortfall of R807 million which is albeit 2,65% of the main allocation for the upcoming financial year, should not be seen as a misnomer, Speaker. A figure like this has the potential to be a destabilising factor to a chronically under-funded Health system and can represent the final storm that finally breaks the walls and foundations of the building upon which we all depend for our health.

So for the financial year the total appropriation for the Vote 6, Programme 1 has been allocated R947 million; Programme 2 for the District Health

Services, has been allocated R12,6 billion – sorry, that one is a million. It has been reduced. That is the Administration. Programme 2 is a R12,6 billion for District Health Services. Programme 3: Emergency Medical Services, I am rounding off the figures, R1,3 billion. Programme 4: Provincial Health Services R4,9 billion; Programme 5, the Central Hospitals has been allocated R81 billion. Programme 6, which is the Health Sciences and Training, R429 million. Programme 7, Healthcare Support Services R661 million. [Counting] 1-2-3-4-5-6, just checking. Programme 8, R1,3 billion.

Having said, Speaker, again, I still indicate that there has been no nominal increase, but this is what we have to allocate. As the world around us is fast changing creating challenges for many to adapt and survive, let us remember, back to the Pantheon. We have built, in the Western Cape we have built this Pantheon. Our Pantheon has stood strong against many crises and scenarios that have posed as risk to destabilise the whole sector. While we will be required to continue to change and evolve over time, we have established a strong core that is made-up of quality characteristics and stands as a testament of who we are. Our Pantheon, Speaker, is a legacy that needs to be protected and it is the foundation of our future successes. We should not only assist healthcare in the Western Cape, but for all of South Africa.

I hereby table the Budget 2024/25 for the Department of Health and Wellness. I thank you.

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie agb Minister.

[The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister.] I recognise the hon Windvogel. Do you need the podium? [Interjection.] Hon Bans, hon Windvogel is on the floor. Perhaps just give us one moment. Thank you very much. †Agbare Windvogel. [Hon Windvogel.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Thank you Speaker. †Goeiemôre, agbare lede, en HOD en sy span, onse mense van McGregor wat inluister, en onse mense in die hele Wes-Kaap. [Good morning, hon members, and HOD and his team, our people from McGregor listening in, and our people in the whole Western Cape.] Speaker, I rise on behalf of the African National Congress to vehemently reject the proposed budget for the Department of Health and Wellness in the Western Cape.

This budget, purportedly intended to serve the needs of our most vulnerable citizens, is nothing short of a betrayal of trust and a dire threat to public healthcare in our province. This debate marks the end of the Sixth Administration, a period fraught with challenges, none more profound than the revenging affects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our health sector. Throughout this ordeal our healthcare workers stood steadfast risking their lives day in and day out to safeguard our communities. Yet, what recognition did they receive from this Administration? Empty promises, contract terminations and a careless disregard for their sacrifices.

Let us be honest that the heroes and heroines of our healthcare systems, those who brave the frontline of the COVID pandemic deserve our utmost respect

and gratitude, yet this Government has failed to acknowledge and honour their sacrifices, instead opting to discard them like expendable commodities. But the disregard for our healthcare workers is merely the tip of the iceberg. Speaker, the budget we are asked to endorse today is symbolic of the utter lack of compassion and empathy within the corridors of power in the Western Cape Government.

Speaker, as we scrutinise the proposed budget it becomes painfully apparent that it falls woefully short of addressing the pressing needs of our healthcare system. While the National Government has increased funding, the Western Cape Government persists in bemoaning and demanding more, a pattern we have observed since 2019. Instead of channelling efforts towards finding solutions to bolster the faltering public healthcare sector in the province, it seems that the Department is intent on concocting one excuse after another. Whether it is the aftermath of COVID-19 or purported insufficient budget allocation cuts from the National Government, excuses abound.

Hon Speaker and members, let us not be fooled by hollow excuses and blame-shifting tactics. The worsening of public healthcare in the province is not an unavoidable outcome thrust upon us by external forces, but rather the consequence of deliberate decisions made by those in leadership within this Department. A glaring example is the 78-year-old woman who had to wait for 10 hours for an ambulance to Eerste River Hospital despite needing urgent medical care. The Department is aware of this case as the complaint was lodged by one of the political parties in the province. Hon Speaker, the HOD

told us in the Committee that if patients waited for five hours for an ambulance then they must be prepared to wait for six hours this year. We say to the HOD, no, things do not have to be like that. The budget for Emergency Medical Services increased by 1,57% to R1,378 billion. Use the money to buy more ambulances and additional personnel.

The Department's budget for the 2024/25 financial year is increased by over R658 million to R30,5 billion. The ANC welcomes this, especially the additional allocation for both equitable shares and conditional grants. Despite this increase, grievances persist.

Speaker, listening to the MEC, one would swear this is the only department affected by the Wage Agreement, Health and Education are the only Departments funded for the 2023 Wage Agreement, receiving 70% and 64,5% respectively, while all other departments, services must absorb the full cost of the Wage Agreement. The Department is now sounding alarm bells about service pressure due to budget pressure as a result of the Wage Agreement. Speaker, make no mistake, the collapse of public healthcare in our province is not the result of insufficient funding from the National Government but rather a consequence of poor planning and negligence on the part of this Administration. To see the negligence you must visit McGregor Clinic as well as Robertson Hospital. I visited these facilities on 19 March this year where I heard about poor services.

Our people are dying in these facilities. Marecia Culai a terminally ill patient

died in Robertson because she could not be transferred to Worcester Hospital because there were no available beds. This has been people's life experience in the province for many years. That did not start last year with the Wage Agreement.

Despite the Provincial Government's pledge to shield frontline services from budget cuts, we are confronted with a litany of reduction to vital programmes and services. Budget allocation for Nutrition, Community Health Clinics and District Hospitals are all decreased in Programme 2. The very lifeline on which the elderly and the poor depend, are systematically dismantled under the guise of fiscal providence. Hospitals like Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain District Hospitals, already strained under immense service pressure, will bear the brunt of these cuts, leaving patients languishing for days on floors and chairs.

Allocations for Central Hospitals, TB Hospitals and General Regional Hospitals are all decreased as well as the budget for Programme 8 responsible for Health Infrastructure and Development.

Speaker, we cannot stress this point enough, patients are left languishing for days sleeping on floors and enduring suffering, not due to national budget cuts but due to the cross-management and negligence of this Department. This place the basic human rights to quality healthcare of individuals like Aunt Sarah residing in the rural outskirts at risk due to the careless administration. Aunt Sarah will have to wait even longer in clinics and

hospital to see a doctor. That is because the Department intended to reduce its personnel from over 34 000 workers to 33 389 by 2026/2027 financial year.

At the time when services pressures are at an all-time high, when our hospitals are inundated with patients in need of care, this Government's response is to diminish the very workforce entrusted with saving lives. The ANC vehemently oppose these careless measures and will fight tooth and nail to protect the interests of our healthcare workers and the community they serve; and what of the promised Klipfontein Regional Hospital that closed down over a decade ago by this very DA Government? We were assured it will be rebuilt and commissioned by 2019, yet, here we stand with the deadline postponed to 2035 in the budget. How many more years must the people of Klipfontein wait for their basic rights to healthcare to be reinstated? How many more excuses will the Administration come up with to justify its failures?

Speaker, but the negligence does not end there. Last year during an oversight visit to Vanguard Community Healthcare Centre we witnessed firsthand the dire condition facing our communities; patient folders are thrown in corridors in a poor facility and a complete lack of urgency from this Department to address these issues. Now as we scrutinise the budget for the coming year we find this critical concern largely disregarded as the facility is not on this year's infrastructure plan for the Department.

Speaker, over the 2024 MTEF the Violence Prevention Unit is allocated R93,823 million amidst budget cuts. The DA Government has showcased a remarkable ability to find additional funds for certain programmes prioritised. The allocation for resources to initiatives like the Violence Prevention Unit speak volumes about the DA's capacity to act when it deems necessary, yet as we witness the strain on our public healthcare system the question begs to be asked, why is the Provincial Government not directing similar urgency and resources to save it from collapse. Our home and community-based care workers who have tirelessly made over 32,2 million client contacts between April 2019 and January 2024, deserve more than mere acknowledgement. They deserve better working conditions and fair compensation for their invaluable services. We reiterate our call to the MEC for fair remuneration of these dedicated workers.

Speaker and hon members, mental wellbeing is a cornerstone of all health and it cannot be neglected. The allocated budget of R258,3 million over the 2024 MTEF falls short in addressing the gravity of the situation, particularly evident in the strain mental-health patients place on our hospitals. More resources are needed to address this challenge. The building of an Acute Psychiatric Unit in Khayelitsha is a step in the right direction, but we must not stop there. We must address the myriad challenges facing the facility as we saw for ourselves when we visited the hospital last year.

Furthermore, while the allocation of R73 million for a PV system in the health bidding is commendable, we urge prioritisation for facilities in a poor

working-class community like the KDH in Mitchells Plain.

The ANC rejects this budget in its entirety, it is anti-poor, anti-worker and anti-humanitarian. It is a budget that prioritises profit over people, politics over principle, and careless indifferences over compassionate action. We cannot in good conscience endorse a budget that condemns our most vulnerable citizens to suffer in despair.

In conclusion, Speaker, the ANC stands with the people of the Western Cape in their fight for quality healthcare, dignity and justice. That is why we passed the NHI Bill in National Parliament this year. We will not rest until every Auntie Sarah, every elderly person, every vulnerable individual in our province receive the care and support they deserve. We will not rest until this DA Government is held accountable for its failures, its negligence and the betrayal of trust. The time for excuses and half measures is over. The people of the Western Cape deserve better, and it is our duty to deliver.

Lastly, Speaker, I want to say to the Department that while the notion of One Health priorities is noble, focusing on collaboration across Human, Veterinary and Environmental Health Sectors, our primary concern should remain the wellbeing of our citizens. The MEC must defer the complexity of the veterinary and environmental health to those specialised in those fields. Then, Speaker, I want to thank our HOD and the entire staff of the Department of Health and Wellness for their hard work. Then lastly the Chairperson of our Committee with his most calm voice.

†Wanneer ek baie woelig is dan bring hy my af. Hy het daai *calm* voice. Ek het vir hom gevra wil hy nie 'n aanbieder op die radiostasie wees nie, so baie dankie, *Chair*, vir jou werk. *MEC*, ons baklei nou en dan maar ek dink ons albei se prioriteit is om ons mense te dien. [When I am very agitated he brings me down. He has that calm voice. I asked him if he did not want to be a presenter on the radio station, so thank you, *Chair*, for your work. *MEC*, we fight now and then but I think both of us' priority is to serve the people.]

So I humbly request that you relook at your budget and take my proposals to heart. I thank you.

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie agb Windvogel. [The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Windvogel.] The next hon member is on the virtual platform and I recognise the hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker the EFF is concerned about the ongoing so-called hiring freeze which continues to take place in the Western Cape, mostly affecting the Groote Schuur Hospital and the Red Cross Children's Hospital. The freeze has been implemented on critical medical posts which includes doctors, registrars, doctors in training, specialist posts as well as nursing staff.

Speaker, these hospitals affected are the largest in the province and they normally assist a lot of people and the freezing of critical medical posts in

these hospitals is already being felt by communities which utilise these hospitals for medical assistance daily. Speaker, the situation in the province is made even worse by the fact that in 2013 G F Jooste Hospital was decommissioned and since then there has never been a replacement. The Western Cape Provincial Government promised to build a new replacement hospital and to complete it by 2019. However, to date there is no replacement hospital and what we are told is that there is a plan somewhere in the pipeline which will be implemented one day when funds are available.

Speaker, the Provincial Government is taking our people for granted. G F Jooste Hospital used to serve the Klipfontein area communities which include Manenberg, Gugulethu and Nyanga, so to now start decommissioning hospitals and then later start freezing critical medical posts in some of our largest hospitals in the province, is a spit in the face of our poor people, and all this is only happening because those affected are poor Coloured and African people from townships who do not matter much to the DA Government. Speaker, since our hospitals are also struggling, clinics in our communities need to start operating 24 hours a day so that our people can start getting medical assistance and in areas close to them. Most of our people are poor and unemployed and some do not even have taxi fair to go and seek that medical assistance from hospitals which are usually very far from them.

Speaker, once our clinics start operating for 24 hours we will also need these clinics to have their own ambulance in order to respond to emergency calls

from communities around the Western Cape. We cannot have clinics with long queues and by 3:00 pm on the same day those who have not received medical assistance yet are turned back and told to come the next day, among other issues that they are faced within their communities. So, Speaker, in conclusion, until all of the above has been taking place, the EFF will not be supporting this budget. Thank you.

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

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Speaker. In the realm of healthcare, the Premier fails to address the closure of vital healthcare facilities like the G F Jooste Hospital, and prolonged the delay in the construction of new facilities, like the Atlantis; underscores the Government's disregard for the health and wellbeing of the underprivileged – not a word about Atlantis that was promised a new facility. In 2021 GOOD suggested that two existing Immunisation Clinics in Atlantis be transferred to the Provincial Department and for them to be transitioned into fully fledged healthcare clinics. However the task team was informed that this process has not yet been implemented and that the budget cuts were as a result of stagnation of progress.

A 60 000 strong community is currently serviced by a 28-bed hospital which is clearly inadequate. During an oversight visit in Atlantis, residents told GOOD they felt neglected because of the poor service they received at the Wesfleur Hospital, which has been housed in temporary facilities over the

past 40 years. The Western Cape Government promised to build a permanent 150 bed facility with adequate medical staff and equipment to accommodate the influx of patients. In a statement to residents in February 2021, the DA Council – then asked about a particular parcel of land for housing – said that the land was unavailable as it was allocated for a hospital. She went on further to say it is a reality now. Yet a letter from the Department late last year to the Atlantis Community Committee stated that the site still had not been identified.

This particular site was identified 40 years ago for a permanent hospital. It is behind the School of Skills, if nobody knows where it is. It belongs to the City and it would have been transferred or sold to the Province.

Yesterday we heard the MEC for Health stating that the system has failed. I would like to remind everybody ... [Interjections.]

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

Ms S LITTLE: ...that this aspect has been in the hands of your party to manage for the past 15 years and its failure is all yours. [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Little.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you.

The SPEAKER: I now recognise the hon Pretorius.

Mr G PRETORIUS: Hon Speaker, I will try my best not to duplicate and overlap too much with what our Minister had to say, because I think it is important that what I do add is for the record.

Last month, Speaker, the Premier delivered his State of Province Address and during that speech he characterised the Western Cape and I will quote: "...as a Province that is working and striving for better every day", and I will be forgiven, Speaker, for suggesting that in the health space our very dedicated and committed officials live up to this mantra every day. Health is often a difficult sector in which to work. Our health workers work or deal with some of the most emotionally charged and difficult situations it is possible to face in public service, and sadly, Speaker, the constantly constricting fiscal envelope in this country has curtailed the tools that they often have available to do their important work.

Happily, Speaker, this budget makes the hard and necessary sacrifices to keep our Health system afloat and to continue to keep our healthcare workers equipped to do their jobs and keep our people healthy. However, I want to emphasise that the fact that this Department under the leadership of Minister Mbombo has been required to be smarter and more efficient than ever before to make limited resources go the distance. Thankfully the allocations contained in this budget proved beyond any doubt that this Department is up to the task.

In accordance with the revised Medium Term Strategic Framework for the period 2019 to 2024, the Department continues to focus on eliminating avoidable and preventable deaths, and promoting wellness and preventing and managing illness, transforming health systems, improving the patient experience and mitigating social factors determining ill health. In 2024/25 the priorities that the Department will be pursuing are informed by the Provincial Strategic Plan; as well as Minister Mbombo's often repeated and ever-present phrase and I quote: "Health Is Everybody's Business."

Speaker, in the modern world there is one concept that no institution and especially healthcare dare ignore, especially when increasing fiscal constraints have become a key challenge to healthcare service delivery. Speaker, that word is "innovation" and even the most cursory reading of this budget reveals that this concept has been baked into every level of this Department's operations. As the Premier noted in his SOPA speech and I quote again:

"Our healthcare system is another example of innovation and partnership. Our partnerships with the universities in this province and commitment to excellence and innovation mean that we host the only public sector hospitals on the African continent that do robotic surgeries."

What these initiatives demonstrate, Speaker, is the lengths to which this Department will go to mobilise technology against the problems faced in the

health sector. The Tele-ICU project that the Minister referred to, leverages the expertise of our best doctors and medical professionals across geographical boundaries, with the result being better and more expert care for our patients.

We see this focus on innovation and technology again in the Department's approach to loadshedding mitigation. It goes without saying that loadshedding cannot be allowed to shut down our hospitals as this would undoubtedly cost lives. However, as is the case with many of the areas over which the ANC claims domain, we cannot rely on Eskom to do what it is charged to do. Diesel generators provide a temporary solution but also are massively expensive. Fuel cost the Department of Health and Wellness in excess of R20 million in the first four months of 2023/24 alone. It is for this reason that we see the Department taking proactive steps to use technology to provide cheap environmentally friendly energy to its facilities through solar power as per the Minister's speech this morning.

R35 million has been allocated toward installing solar panels at provincial health buildings this year with another R38 million next year. While this represents a massive investment in infrastructure it also ultimately saves money in the long run.

More importantly it once again helps our Department to maximise its resources and provides better outcomes for our patients, but, Speaker, it is sad to see such an innovative Department hobbled by the significant cuts

made to the budget as a result of the actions of National Treasury.

The National Equitable Share formula has decreased the percentage allocation to the Western Cape even though its percentage population and burden of disease have increased. At the same time the Covid pandemic and its aftermath have increased substance abuse cases putting further strain on our Health system.

Between 2023/24 and 2024/25 the Department's allocation has increased by 2,5 to R30,489 billion as we have heard, but at the same time inflation in January 2024 has been 5,3%, while the medical sector inflation rate has been 6,5%. Owing to these inflation rates being larger than the increase in our budget allocation it means that the Department is experiencing a real decrease in its budget and has had to absorb the cost of rising inflation. While this has been an ongoing trend for the Health Sector the Department has already had to manage a decrease in its baseline budget as well as an increase in the Public Wage Bill last year and this year, and if I may unpack a little what the Minister referred to. For every R100 000 of the Department's budget that was allocated last year, R105 250 would be needed to offer the same services when accounting for inflation in this year. Instead the Department essentially received R102 500. This means, when considering the Department's R30,4 billion budget, the Department will experience a shortfall of R807,866 million.

It is important to note that these figures are based on conservative rates of

inflation and do not account for possible increases in operational costs as the Minister referred to, for instance electricity.

The impact of a decreased real budget means that the Department will continue with its cost saving interventions as well as applying extra focus on service prioritisation and redesign.

The reality, Speaker, is that the public health system will remain under pressure for the next three to five years, and lest anyone believe that criticism can be levelled at this Provincial Budget for these shortcomings, I wish to place on record that the budget we consider today represents the best compromise we have available to us. The blame rests on National.

I have mentioned the decrease in Equitable Share funding but let us remember that our Conditional Grants have once again been slashed. We have lost R180,15 million from the District Health Programme Grant over the MTEF. While a further R69,14 million has been lost over the MTEF from the Health Facility Revitalisation Grant. Let us not forget the words of Minister Wenger during her address to this House on this budget during which she told us that the amount spent on debt servicing by our National Government in one day could pay for almost 1 000 nurses to be employed for a year with millions to spare.

Speaker, the Western Cape Health Department and Wellness has been proactive in dealing with this challenge. They have formed strong

partnerships both internally and externally so that it can ensure our resilience during these challenging times. Internally senior management have formed a framework and a set of principles for healthcare service reprioritisation and are actively engaging our various health districts in using these guidelines to remain within the constrained budget envelope, and in spite of all these cuts, Speaker, we still see the Department pushing ahead with the vital infrastructure improvements.

I have mentioned the much-needed loadshedding alleviation investments into infrastructure, but it would also be remiss of me not to mention the work that continues to be done on new acute psychiatric units as indicated by the Minister. I am also proud to see the upgrades to the Emergency Centre at Groote Schuur Hospital as well as the continuous maintenance of our many top-level facilities such as Laingsburg Clinic. Just imagine, Speaker, what this Department could accomplish if National would come to the table and bring the same level of innovation, the same level of financial management, and the same amount of will to do more for our people.

Speaker, as I conclude it is a personal honour and privilege to commend and thank the very capable officials I have engaged with since becoming a member of this Legislature.

In particular I wish to thank the Portfolio Procedural Officer Team of Ms Nomonde Jamce and Mr Ben Daza. Their institutional knowledge and sound advice and guidance qualify them in my view as consummate professionals.

To them and all the departmental officials, Dr Cloete, Mr Kaye, Dr Kariem, and all those who are not here, all the staff on the fifth floor, all the Standing Committee members, and thanks for the compliments member Windvogel, and certainly Mr Ryan Hand, my researcher, and before him Mr Luke Albert. Luke was there the day I was actually sworn in and Luke is here while I deliver my last speech. Thanks Luke.

I want to really thank them and I want to thank the members of this House, I am truly grateful that our paths have crossed. I can honestly say that my short sojourn as a member of this House was a career highlight.

Lastly, Speaker, in the words of someone that I have the greatest respect for, Minister Nomafrrench Mbombo and I quote:

“We will continue to build on our previous successes so that we can offer innovative solutions in the years to come. Health is everybody's business and we will ensure that we leave no one behind.”

It has been my privilege to make my contribution to that vision, Speaker, and it is my privilege today to support this Vote on behalf of the DA. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Pretorius. Hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Thank you very much. Member Windvogel, of course *asilwi*. We are not fighting, we are doing it

for the Auntie Sarahs, so for us as an executive making us account, is part of what is supposed to happen. There is supposed to be checks and balances and the more people that become vocal, that is when we reflect and look and regroup. So it has never been about being personal for me and any kind of input I will always appreciate it because you are not doing it for your Windvogel family. You are doing it for the people of Swellendam. You are doing it for the people of the Western Cape. You are doing it for the people of South Africa, but of course we have to consider in terms of, I mean to sift the facts, the opinions and so forth.

Now just quickly in regard to the ambulances. Last year we had new replacements of the ambulances, 114 in the different forms, like 30 Toyota Quantums, 10 VW KD for the wheelchairs and all others, there are SUVs and all of those. So instead, we are not only focusing on the quantity of the ambulances but also on the quality and also, and it does not – because in most instances you would be counting how many, yet you will find others that are probably they are in the workshop or you might be saying that you have got how many and they are not in the workshop but you find that they are not catered for a particular in terms of their response. So what we are proud of, what we pride on is about the quantity and the quality but the challenge we have is the issue of the warm bodies because it needs about 10 to 11 people in a shift, 24-hour shift to manage one ambulance. I did mention in terms of the challenges we have in regard to the staffing because of the budgeting, but the issues related to the vehicle and whatever so thank you to the Mobility and also to the GMT for being able to assist us. So when I was

talking about the drones, it is in addition to the other kind of responses according to the different context in regard to that.

Now about "the budget is anti-poor," I am just reflecting in the Metro where are the hospitals; where are the clinics in the Metro in regard to the haves and the have-nots. I do not have any hospital or Clinic in Clifton, no hospital, no clinic in Camps Bay. Also the other parts in Bishops Court, there is no such. I am talking about the people where you say that is anti-poor. Most of the clinics and the hospital and the population where they come from is mostly in those places, it is Bishop Lavis, it is Wesfleur, it is Khayelitsha, it is all of those. So when you say for example the District Hospitals or the District Health Services, this is what we are budgeting for, in regard to the HIV/Aids or all other illnesses and so forth. So the money goes to where, because there are no facilities in the rich areas. So how do I take money to Clifton, when there are no Clinics there, but anyway, I am just making an example.

Then the issue about the One Health, when I started speaking I spoke about the Health System, and therefore I make an argument, a case that we have to strengthen the whole system, you cannot strengthen one, like what is the point you have 90% of your budget goes to appointing staff, but you will not be able to have medicines for the staff to give to the patients, or you will have the facilities that are falling apart because you do not go to the maintenance, but also I made a case about the polycrisis, geopolitical wars, I made an example like with the Ukraine where it impacted. When we speak

about the cooking oil that is expensive that you buy at home, it also impacts on us because you have patients eating 24 hours. We are the only sector that operates seven days, 24 hours, 365 days it does not close and people must eat. So that pricing, when we complain about there were no eggs; it means there are no eggs at the hospital, in order to access those eggs if they have to eat the eggs they have to get it elsewhere. Therefore what I am trying to highlight is that there are many other factors that are impacting on any sector, but health absorbs most of them.

When you have been having a medical aid and then you become unemployed and then they take away your medical aid, you go to the public hospital, or when your medical aid cannot be able to offer you some of the operations and so forth, which is – I am making an example. In Table View Clinic, it is a City Clinic but it is only mostly for minor ailments and the children. All those old age home people, which some of them might have medical aid but if they do not get covered, so they have to go to the Dunoon CHC. It is similar also in other areas so the point that I am trying to make, you look at the whole system. So on the issue of the One Health, I did not want – I was not sure whether I should respond or not, but probably let me just do a one-minute thing. I know that it is lunch time and I promised my colleagues that I will not do a long lecture.

I promised, because yesterday everyone was tired. Jo! We were tired. So I promised, but I have to use this opportunity. One Health, let me say, the plants, I mean the health plants, the health of the animals, and then you say

we must give to the veterinary.

Firstly there is a body called "epidemiology" in medicine that looks at the environment. It is a triangle. They use a triangle, they call it – it is an epidemiology triangle. There is a host. There is an agent. There is an environment. The host might be me as a human being, so that you can take it even when we are dealing with the COVID or even with the TB. So the host is me, which is I could be affected in terms of my status, age and so forth. The agent part of it, the agent, it could be the bacteria. A bacteria is like a living organism which is that bacteria that causes TB. It is an agent, or the virus, corona virus that came originally from the bats and whatever; it impacts on the hosts, and then the environment. Therefore, what is the point of us only focusing only on the host, on "you are ill," without looking in terms of all of those so that you can understand the whole concept of One Health. You can sit down and not do anything, but there will be bacteria, there are also the host, I mean also the agent and so forth, and then also lastly on this, research does show the drivers actually of health, 40% is the socio-economic environment, 10% is the physical environment, 30% is the health behaviour, only 20% is clinical care so when we talk about the Violence Prevention Units in regard to collating the data so that the people who is supposed to do the job they could have information within 24 hours, because we collect that evidence in our system, we are giving to the law enforcement officers, we are giving them to social development, because they came to us. So when we are providing this information it is because it is part of "preventive and promotive," your sector that must do something.

Education, we have seen a high teenage pregnancy in this area, it means that probably these girls are not at school or they are pregnant at school, it is part of what we do. We cannot just sit down and only wait until people are coughing in order for us to be able to respond. We have to balance. Like I made an example of the climate change, health generally is a major contributor on destroying the planet. So the carbon emission that is there, the waste management and all of those, we can just sit and relax until the whole planet is whatever, but we are being proactive to make sure that our things that emit a lot of carbon like if there is still boiler systems in the old hospital or like I made an example of the laundry, where we have to change that old system, spend a whole lot of water in one laundry machine, where you could be able to have the ones that are fairly new. So it is a contribution not only to those, because for that laundry we reduce actually our expenditure in terms of the City fees and all of those, because now we can even have water, potable water even for us. We can even provide water for the whole of that area in the Tygerberg.

The point that I am trying to make, the Health system is not only a health problem like focusing on a disease, it is because more than 60% of what causes illness is happening outside the Health system, but we cannot keep quiet, we have to do something about it. So we become a classroom and a laboratory for South Africa in future to be able to make use of us because we are already having that data. Also, lastly, the Human Development Index that includes the education, the life expectancy, and all of those gender equality,

you might ask why we want to pursue that, but we do know that when there are issues of the gender inequalities it will impact, whether it is through the violence, it is through the rape, it is through whatever, it will come on us. So there we have the data, let us share that data around that.

Thank you very much, but we will continue. I will come also to do the presentation as we did with the “Nothing about us, without us”, but now we will do it on the budget. We will go to District Municipalities so that we know how much it is going to be like. You asked about Robertson and whatever. You get to know that, actually if they – let us say the initial budgeting or at least your expenditure was a R2 million, we do not have money now, we are going to spend R1,6 million, therefore changes must be done in regard to that.

Member Cassiem, thank you very much and I think I have already spoken about the issue of the G F Jooste and all other hospitals, I will not repeat myself, the speech is available so that you can scrutinise it.

Member Little, about Atlantis, initially I put Atlantis on the speech but I said, "No, I know it is only GOOD. GOOD will use it. I will know, I knew that you would bring it so I have got the whole answer for you, which did provide even to GOOD in Parliament when they asked about it. Already the process is there, it has already happened.

The Protea Park and the Section C, which have been under the City, the City

approved it I think May or June last year that they need to be transferred to the Province. That part of it is a phased approach which is when I was there also engaging with the communities, because the main issue which impacted on the Wesfleur Hospital is about, with those two City Clinics which are the packages, where they were not providing for the adult curative care and therefore it ended up, all these adults would go and queue at the Wesfleur unnecessarily. So what we have done, whilst it is a phase-approach in regard to the same process that we underwent in the nine / ten other facilities we provincialised, took it from the City, but those ones were joint facilities, so already things are happening. About 3 337 of the adults that used to go to Wesfleur Hospital just for their chronic, being seen by the doctor, they are being seen in Protea Park and once the whole transfer has been completed it is going to be Protea Park CDC, it is going to be Section C CDC, so already some of the other packages that belong to a CDC, CDC is the higher one. I normally call it higher primary, because the clinics under the City they were junior primary, so I am making an example of schools. So already there are other packages that belong to the CDC that are happening in those two, and therefore reducing the whole pressure that is coming to Wesfleur, because they used to all go there to queue, to long queues.

Now what needs to happen, compared to what happened in these current nine or ten ones that we have provincialised, what is going to happen now it is about whilst we still have to look at the re-advertising and whatever the post, because in addition, part of the package of the CDC you will need psychosocial, you will need the mental health to be part of that, mental

illness. You need to have an OT, you need to have the dental, even that; not necessarily that it might be every day. It might be once a month and all. It is part of the packages so it is a part of the phase-approach, *bietjie-bietjie*, but we have already adopted and the City Council have already said "Go ahead with it," so just first things first. It is about to work around the service pressures that are there. It is already happening around that.

Lastly, member Pretorius, thank you very much for the words. Indeed I agreed to member Windvogel, although some of it was in Afrikaans but I could hear some of the other parts. Auntie Sarah taught me a little, *†n bietjie praktiese taal*, [a bit of practical language,] of the Afrikaans so I could be able to hear, but indeed your calmness, your calmness, even when on the first day it was not like a person who was not even a member or MP / MPL before and also that health, it was the first time being exposed to the Health Sector. Your calmness and also for attending almost all the events as the Chair of the Standing Committee in Health, you have been very, very beneficial even to the staff there. Your input and also your insights because as a senior politician based there, like in George and all of those, you made quite a contribution because Health is not only focusing only on the Government, but also the political society and the civil society. So thank you very much for that.

So, having said that, I want to thank the Department, Dr Cloete, who have been in this Pantheon for quite a long time. We have built it even before some of us, including you, became part in this position, but one of the

strengths is about this team approach where everyone has a role to play, especially during the crises where people have been able to be there, so you and your team, thank you very much, and the people that are here, Mr Simon Kaye, who is the DDG responsible for the corporate affairs. That includes the finances, and also Dr Kariem, who is the neck of Dr Cloete. He is a DDG, COO, but mostly focusing on the clinical aspects, everything that has got to be clinical.

Then Ms Nonhlanhla Nkosi, who is the Chief Director on the Strategy Support, who does most of these PowerPoints and so on, we just give it to them and their team, so I want to thank you very much and also the whole of the top management that is not there, and others who are not here – our partners, the academics, the Universities, the Colleges, the Clinic Committees, the Hospital Boards, and everyone who has been able to assist us. So I want to thank you very much.

Then lastly my colleagues, I have already thanked the members who contributed to the debate but my colleagues here especially that you have to remind me, "Do not take long," and actually I even take longer because I always get excited when I talk about the health topic. I always think about the other things that I want to say, and then, my team, Luke and everyone there, Douglas, who always says, "Minister, you do not have to do 404, these are not your students. We are just going to put it at 101." I said, "Whatever." But once now the people ask me questions I end up wanting to talk more but I want to thank you very much, and for the Premier, for the opportunity and

also for everyone. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister Mbombo. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister Mbombo. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. I am going to allow the guests of the Minister to exit. Hon members, we are on Order number 2 of nine Orders of the Day. Can I ask would there be any objection for us to continue with the next Vote before breaking for lunch? No objections?

Okay, if you want to raise an objection. Okay, can you just give me an indication? Can we continue with the next Vote? [Interjections.]

No, no, no, colleagues, hon members, I am really putting it to the House because it affects all of us. There are nine Orders. We are only on Order number 2. Can we continue? Can we continue? Thank you very much. Hon Minister?

An HON MEMBER: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, this side of the House we are more than happy to continue.

The SPEAKER: Alright. I think we have got a unanimous agreement that we will continue. Hon Minister, can you just give me a – Minister Maynier, can you give me an indication if you are expecting guests or can I continue?

Thank you very much. The Secretary will read the Third Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 5: Education – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2024].

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Minister of Education, Minister Maynier.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Speaker.

This year we will spend R30,85 billion on education in the Western Cape. This is the largest budget for Education that we have ever tabled and the largest budget of any department in our province. It will allow us to build on the successful programmes we have implemented as part of our bold new direction for Education, including the #BackOnTrack Programme to reverse learning losses and our Rapid School Build Programme to build more schools faster than ever before in poor communities.

So in the 2024/25 financial year we will build on these successes to improve learning outcomes, to expand access to education and to develop resilience in our schools. We do this with our Department's clear vision in mind to deliver quality education for every learner in every classroom in every school in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic effectively wiped out a decade of

progress in improving learning outcomes in our province. Experts have warned us that it will take another 10 years to claw back those learning losses without drastic action. We are not willing to wait a decade and we are willing to take drastic action.

So this year we will spend R292 million on our #BackOnTrack Programme to reverse learning losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and improve learning outcomes in the Western Cape. The #BackOnTrack Programme is the largest learning recovery programme in our country. Starting from our launch last year we targeted 22 000 learners in Grade 4, 7, 8, 10 and 12 in schools most in need of support according to their systemic test results. These learners had the opportunity to attend extra Saturday classes and holiday classes, which proved a huge success. In addition to these grades we invest heavily in the Foundation Phase to give all 310 000 of our youngest learners a solid foundation upon which to build their future school career, but we knew that the success of this programme would rely on supporting both our learners and their teachers.

We targeted over 9 000 teachers across all school phases for extra training and professional support. The feedback we have received from our schools has been encouraging and we appreciate their willingness to share their thoughts on what we can do to improve the programme.

We released the results of the 2023 Annual Systemic Tests earlier this year which show an improvement in Mathematics and Language across all school

phases in the Western Cape. These improvements are especially evident in the foundation phase with the Grade 3 Mathematics pass rate increasing by 4,3% points and Grade 3 Language pass rates increasing by 4%. We have also managed to halt the decline in Grade 6 and Grade 9 results with an improvement in both Maths and Language scores for those grades, but, hon Speaker, there is still work to be done.

This year we will double the number of Grade 4 and Grade 7 learners targeted and maintain our targets for Grade 8,10 and 12 learners in schools for a total of 28 000 learners in these grades and of course we will continue to support our 300 and 10 000 Foundation Phase learners. So in total #BackOnTrack will provide 338 000 learners, or roughly 30% of our province's total learner population, with extra support to improve learning outcomes.

Our additional professional support for teachers will also continue this year with over 9 500 teachers set to receive support this year. Our learners have already started their extra classes for the year. When I visited learners at the Rocklands Primary School together with the Premier to experience the implementation of the #BackOnTrack Programme firsthand, what struck me most was how excited learners were to be there and that they could not wait to get into class on a weekend. We appreciate the additional hours our principals, our tutors, our school staff and our officials are putting in to support our learners on weekends and during holidays across the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, we know that our province is under extreme admission pressure and we have already received new admissions applications for nearly 60 000 Grade 1 and Grade 8 learners seeking a place in a Western Cape School in 2025.

So it is clear that to keep up with this demand we need to urgently increase the number of places available in our schools, including those for learners with special needs. This year we will spend R860 million on our Rapid School Build Infrastructure Programme to expand access to education in the Western Cape. The Rapid School Build Programme marks a clear departure from business as usual building timelines, drawing in support from all stakeholders to get the job done.

Consider the Fisherhaven Academy completed in just 71 days to be ready in time for the 2024 school year. Consider the new classrooms at Spine Road High School, Windsor High School, Parow High School and Westcott Primary School, designed to blend seamlessly with the existing buildings and create more places for learners at these high demand schools and consider the new Lwandle Primary School, the first part of the Lwandle Education Precinct. Construction at our Blue Ridge sports ground site in Wallacedene is also progressing well after we obtained an interdict against the group that was delaying the construction.

This year, in preparation for the 2025 school year, our Department aims to build at least six new schools in areas where demand for placement is

highest. We have also budgeted for at least 300 additional classrooms at existing schools, including high schools where the demand for places is highest, but that is not all.

We recently announced that the National Treasury has made an additional provisional allocation of R2,5 billion over the next three years to our Rapid School Build Programme. The provisional funding is specifically allocated to build new schools that will expand the number of school places available in our province in areas that have the largest class sizes and the highest demand for placement. Once this funding is confirmed we will be in a position to significantly expand the number of planned new schools over the next three years in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, it is often said that the measure of a society is how it treats the most vulnerable members. The reality we face is that the education of learners with special needs is not fully catered for by National Government, so we are filling the gap to make sure that our most vulnerable learners are supported. This year we will provide an additional R71,4 million to improve our support for learners with autism spectrum disorder and we will provide extra funding for learners with profound intellectual disabilities with an additional R70,4 million allocated to support these vulnerable learners.

We completed two new special needs schools this year and have been adding dozens of extra classrooms to existing special schools to accommodate more learners and continuing this commitment for the coming school year as part

of our Rapid School Build Programme we will build 30 additional classrooms for learners with special needs at special and existing schools.

Hon Speaker, we are acutely aware that external challenges like crime and loadshedding have a negative impact on the daily functioning of our schools. We are playing our part to support our schools as they tackle these challenges. This year we will spend R57,5 million on responding to safety challenges in our schools and our school communities.

Last year we funded 46 school resource officers who are law enforcement officers stationed at our schools to tackle crime and deal with safety matters. This year, we will fund an additional 18 school resource officers so that we have a total of 64 officers supporting our school and next year we will add another 18 for a total of 82 school resource officers. We will of course continue to subsidise holiday security at over 400 schools every school holiday, which of course is when these schools are at greatest risk, and we will continue to provide support to our schools through violence prevention initiatives, holiday programmes, improved access control and of course through the Safe Schools Call Centre.

Hon Speaker, we are also facing the difficult reality that National Government is not able to provide a sustainable supply of electricity. Loadshedding has been crippling our economy and is making it harder for teaching and learning to occur in our schools too. We must do what we can to help shield our schools from the negative impact that loadshedding has on

eLearning, administrative systems, cooking and lighting, and to do our part to improve energy efficiency in our schools.

So this year we will spend R144 million to develop the use of green energy solutions in schools in the Western Cape. Our successful light replacement project, which replaced high energy usage existing lighting with energy efficient LED lighting, will continue this year with a further 30 schools receiving replacement lighting.

We also plan to install a solar PV inverter and backup battery system in at least 60 schools this year to keep the lights on when loadshedding strikes so that teaching and learning can continue.

Hon Speaker, at the end of last year we suffered a devastating R716,4 million blow to our budget for education here in the Western Cape. Our conditional grants, including the Education Infrastructure Grants, were cut by R179,4 million.

In addition the National Government only provided 64% of the Wage Agreement funding due to us, which means that we were short changed by R537 million.

This forced us to implement cost containment measures, including building fewer schools and employing fewer relief teachers. This will put pressure on our schools and more pressure on our teachers.

So I want to be absolutely clear, that we are doing everything we can to support our schools, to support our teachers and ultimately to improve learning outcomes here in the Western Cape.

We have taken steps to seek additional sources of funding to deliver quality education to our learners. As already mentioned we have received a provisional allocation of R2,5 billion through the budget facility for Infrastructure for our Rapid School Build Programme, which is a huge credit to our Infrastructure team, but in addition we are using our provincial funds to compensate for the shortfalls in our funding allocation by:

- Topping up the National School Feeding Scheme Grant by R63,9 million to cover food price inflation.
- Topping up school Quintile funding by R498,7 million to fund 315 additional no-fee schools in Quintile 4 and Quintile 5.
- Topping up our infrastructure budget by R975,4 million from our Provincial Equitable Share.

To put this in perspective, hon Speaker, to put this in perspective, we contribute 42% of our infrastructure budget from our provincial funds, compared to other provinces that contribute less than 10% and some who rely exclusively on the Education Infrastructure Grants and we are developing our partnerships with the private sector to increase private sector investment in

the education sector here in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, despite the immense financial challenges we face we will continue to do everything in our power to build on our successes to improve learning outcomes, to expand access to education and to develop resilience in our schools.

The past year has been a tough one, but we should all take hope from the incredible dedication of our principals, of our teachers and of our school staff. They are superheroes who show so much care, so much support and so much love for our children every day.

I would also like to thank our Education Department officials led by our Superintendent-General, Mr Brent Walters, as well as my own staff in the Ministry of Education, led by Ms Odette Cason, for their hard work during the year. Together we will continue to strive towards quality education for every learner in every classroom in every school here in the Western Cape. I thank you.

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

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the African National Congress to firmly reject the proposed budget for Education in the Western Cape. This budget, if passed, will only perpetuate

the downward spiral of education in our province, characterised by worsening matric results and the persistent crisis of learner placements, amongst other issues.

Education is the cornerstone of any society's progress, yet in the Western Cape we continue to witness the systemic neglect of our learners, particularly those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. The challenges we face are numerous and they demand urgent and meaningful interventions.

One of the most pressing issues plaguing our education system is the crisis of learner placements. Yes, a crisis. The MEC and the DA refuse to admit that it is a crisis. Year after year under this DA Administration thousands of learners are denied access to education due to the failure of the Western Cape Education Department to adequately address this particular issue, or they start late.

This crisis is exacerbated by discriminatory language and admissions policies employed by predominantly White former model C schools which act as barriers to access for most learners in our province and, yes, the records that we have been receiving indicate that it is not learners who applied late or came from other provinces that are being denied mainly, and just to add. In spite of the DA's demand to turn the Western Cape into a separate apartheid state, the Western Cape is part of South Africa.

To address this challenge the ANC Government is passing the Basic

Education Law Amendment Bill which the DA and their right-wing partners, such as the Freedom Front Plus, the ACDP and Cape Independent, oppose. The passing of the Bill represents a significant milestone in our ongoing effort to transform education not only in the Western Cape, but throughout our country. This crucial legislation holds the potential to revolutionise the educational landscape by addressing systemic inequalities, improving access to quality education for all learners and fostering inclusive learning environments. We will do away with discriminatory language and admissions policies to guarantee access for our learners to all schools in the province.

Moreover the mismanagement of funds by the DA Government has only exacerbated these challenges. Between the 2019/2020 and 2021/22 over R792 million meant for the building of schools and employing teachers, was returned to the Revenue Fund due to underspending. This money could have been instrumental in addressing not only the crisis of unplaced learners, but also the challenge of overcrowded classrooms.

Under the DA's 15 year misrule of this province, we have witnessed gradual decline in the quality of education, particularly for the underprivileged in the Western Cape. Our province has dropped to fifth in the Matric pass rate, with a dismal 26% of Bachelor passes coming from no-fee schools, this is unacceptable. During the ANC's governance of the Western Cape from 2004 till 2009 under MECs Dugmore and Yousuf Gabru, we saw higher Matric pass rates, which was over 14% above the national average. For the first time ever the pass rate of our province is below the national average and this has

happened under the leadership of MEC Maynier.

Despite the worsening performance in Matric examinations this Department has slashed the budget for examination and education-related services by 39,65% to R864,7 million. This is unacceptable.

Hon Speaker, the proposed budget fails to address these fundamental issues and instead perpetuates the status quo. While there are allocations for initiatives such as school resource officers, which we welcome, and emergency loadshedding packs, these measures are insufficient to address the root causes of our education crisis.

In the Budget Committee meeting we sharply raised the fact that the allocated R76,9 million over the MTEF is not enough. School safety is a serious matter in our province and the allocated funds must show the seriousness of Government to address this matter.

The Department did accede to the fact that its funding is insufficient, even though they will not be making an additional funding allocation. We demand an increase in the number of schools where school resource officers are deployed. The priority must be all schools in the priority crime hotspot areas. This would ensure that every learner has a safe and conducive learning environment.

Additionally we urge the Department to ensure that emergency loadshedding

packs are distributed equitably, prioritising the most vulnerable learners.

Hon Speaker, the ANC cares deeply about education, which remains our top priority. This is evident not only in consistently allocating the funding to Education as one of the top two departments along with Health, receiving the highest funding, but also the notable increases in both Equitable Share allocation and Conditional Grants for this particular budget rising by 3,78% and over 13% respectively. These increases would have been even greater were it not for the decrease in the social sector EPWP Incentive Grant for the provinces primarily due to reprioritisation of funds for the presidential employment stimulus.

The most significant decrease in this Department's budget comes from the Provincial Treasury financing, which has decreased by 70% from R1,2 billion in adjusted estimates, to just R345 million. Nonetheless this Department's total receipts have increased to R30,850 billion and are projected to rise to R32,499 billion by 2026/27 over the MTEF period.

These increases, hon Speaker, include a 7% boost in the National School Nutrition Programme Grant from R496,8 million to R531,6 million this year, ensuring that our underprivileged children receive a daily meal at school. It is crucial that our people understand that this programme is a cornerstone of the ANC's commitment [Interjections.] because the ANC genuinely cares.

Hon Speaker, the ANC-led National Government understands that Early

Childhood Development is the foundation of education. The ANC is committed to ensuring the well-being of our youth, evident in the substantial increase of 44,54% in the Conditional Grant allocation for ECD, soaring from just over R86 million last year to R124,357 million this year. This allocation, hon Speaker, has shown tangible benefits as highlighted in the budget documents, stating the Early Child Development Age 0 to 4 Programme also recorded successes for the first two years since the function shifted from DSD to WCED, and I am not going to go and read the entire thing. This achievement underscores the ANC Government's dedication to uplifting our communities in the province.

Additionally, the Education Infrastructure Grant has seen a commendable 15,28% increase to over R1,306 billion driven by President Cyril Ramaphosa's initiative to build more schools for disadvantaged children in the Western Cape. The ANC advocates for the construction of sturdy, quality schools, unlike those hastily erected with sub-standard materials through the Rapid School Build Programme. We believe in the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative, known as ASIDI, an ANC-led initiative aimed at replacing inadequate schools built with inferior materials.

Through ASIDI the African National Congress National Government has built 25 quality schools in the Western Cape, including Silverstream Primary School, Die Duine Primary School, Heideveld Primary School, Scottsdene Secondary and Kensington Secondary School, demonstrating the ANC's commitment to providing quality education to children from impoverished

communities.

In contract, hon Speaker, this DA-led Administration's reduction in the infrastructure budget threatens to undo the progress made by the ANC. This proposed budget slashes infrastructure development funding by 14,24% from R2,68 million in last year's Adjusted Budget Estimate to just over R2,3 billion. This reduction is deeply troubling especially considering the pressing infrastructure challenges faced by many schools, such as Kuyasa Primary School in Ward 99, Khayelitsha.

The dire situation at that particular school where learners have endured sewage spills within the school premises for a decade exemplifies the DA-led Government's negligence, resulting in the closure of 11 classes and forcing 230 learners to endure deplorable conditions. In fact what we find is a fight between the DA-led City of Cape Town and the DA-led Provincial Government on this matter. They cannot find each other on who is to blame and on who must take responsibility. So poor people must suffer. We as the ANC have pledged to work with the community [Interjections.], with councillors and even with the Department and the City to find solutions.

The proposed budget reduction in infrastructure funding and neglect of critical issues in our schools are unacceptable, hon Speaker. The ANC remains committed to ensuring quality education and equitable opportunities for all, and we urge this Government to reconsider its priorities and invest in the future of our nation, even though they are an outgoing government.

We cannot ignore the well-being of our teachers and learners. The budget must allocate more funds for psychosocial support and teacher development to ensure that our educators are equipped to provide the best possible education.

Hon Speaker, in my work of crisscrossing the province to assess the state of our education and our schools, I came across the sad story of Mrs Barbara September.

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

Mr G BOSMAN: Hon Speaker, through you, I would like to know if the hon member is prepared to take a question at this time?

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): No.

The SPEAKER: ...hon member Bosman. Hon member Sayed, are you prepared to take a question?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): I am not prepared to take a question.

The SPEAKER: The hon member is not prepared to take your question. Hon member Sayed, you may continue.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): I have come across a sad story of Mrs Barbara September, a hardworking and dedicated servant who is being allegedly exploited by MEC Maynier's Department. We condemn the alleged exploitation of workers like Mrs September at La Plaisante Primary School in Wolseley, who has served as a cleaner for 23 years without any job security or any fair wages. We call upon the MEC and his Department to swiftly address this particular issue and the broader exploitation of workers at our schools.

The proposed budget for education in the Western Cape falls short of addressing urgent needs of our learners and educators. Hon Speaker, as representatives of the people it is our duty to reject this budget and demand a more equitable, inclusive approach to education in our province.

As I conclude, hon Speaker, allow me to thank each stakeholder whom I have had the honour to work with whilst conducting oversight in the Basic Education landscape. I am grateful to each and every parent, the learners, the educators, our departmental officials, including the HOD. Yes, we have differed, but the differences have been towards building better education and we have been able to find solutions at times.

The colleagues on both sides of the House, including the hon member

Maynier, we have differed, but we have differed with the purpose of ensuring quality education.

Let me thank the Chairperson and also continue to pray for our hon Lorraine Botha who left us very sadly a few years ago. She was a commendable chairperson, a commendable member of this House. a dedicated public servant.

I also want to thank the Legislature staff, including and especially our procedural officer, Ms Wasiema Hassen-Moosa, who has really assisted members in exercising our oversight and has gone over and above her responsibilities.

When we differed robustly in the Committee and in this House over issues of education it was all in the service of improving education in our province. Together let us work towards building a brighter future for our children and a more inclusive Western Cape which yet again becomes a home for all its residents. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Sayed. I recognise the hon member Cassiem on the virtual platform.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, we are now heading towards the end of the Sixth Parliament and it has been clear throughout this period that the education system in the Western Cape is not

only on the decline, but it is also falling apart.

Hon Speaker, each and every year parents and learners alike will have to battle with the school online placement system, which is riddled with poor administrative procedure and systems. Even after going through this painful and confusing procedure their children will still remain unplaced due to some technical glitches and misunderstanding.

Hon Speaker, the worst part is that no one really knows how this online school placement system really works. From parents to the administrators of the system itself within the Western Cape Education Department and all this is the fault of the Department. In some cases parents complain that they are required to apply online and then submit hard copies physically in the schools and only for their children to be rejected based on the applications being incomplete.

The question which arises is if a learner's application is incomplete why is the system not done in such a way that it will not allow submission of an incomplete application for starters, or means are put in place to bring such incompleteness of the application to the attention of both the learner and parent as early as possible?

Hon Speaker, it does not make sense why rejection should be a solution, especially in cases of applicants who have tendered their application early. In some cases Black parents complain that their children are rejected on a

technicality when they apply for placements in Fourth and Fifth Quantile schools by being told that these schools are Science and Math schools, and these are the schools which a lot of resources are spent at.

Hon Speaker, in recent years the Western Cape Matric pass rate has been declining in a downward spiral. It then does not come as a surprise why the province has fallen to 5th place in the 2023 Matric results when compared to other provinces. Part of the reason why there is a dip in the Matric pass rate in this province is due to the fact that the Western Cape Education Department does not want to equip township schools with resources especially where African and Coloured learners attend.

Hon Speaker, there is also a high level of unfairness in a manner in which teachers are permanently employed within the schooling system. Teachers employed by the school governing bodies are often denied contracts even when they are later shifted and placed under the Western Cape Education Department. Those teachers who persist about getting contracts are mostly punished later on by being overlooked for permanent posts within the Department. This is becoming a norm within the Department and it is wrong.

In conclusion, hon Speaker, it is for these reasons that the EFF will not support this Vote.

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

Ms S LITTLE: I am not quite sure if you are going to say that after I have spoken.

Hon Speaker, under Premier Winde's Government, the Matric pass rate has fallen below the national average. This proves that the R1,2 billion spent on the #BackOnTrack programme has not been effectively utilised.

Despite going to great lengths to create public awareness earlier this year our award-winning library in Dunoon, which was completed in 2019, the same DA has forgotten to mention that the DA-led Western Cape Government has implemented its decision to stop building new libraries in this province. In 2022/23 it built its last three libraries and will now be rolling out new library service points through wheely bins and containers, and out of the 375 library service points only 228 libraries have public internet access. [Interjections.] I need not remind the MEC and Premier of the value of libraries for the education of our underprivileged youth.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms S LITTLE: Furthermore this Department continues to waste its budget by fighting the unfair firing of a performing principal of Heathfield High School. The principal who took ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

Ms S LITTLE: The principal who took the performance of its Matric pupils to its all-time high of 84%. This has now fallen 50,5%. The Western Cape Government has spent over R3 million on defending this indefensible behaviour against the educator, and strangely enough the administration that is actively fighting the proposed BELA Bill on the strength that the BELA Bill removes powers from school governing bodies and puts these powers in the hands of the MEC, has in the handling of this case done precisely what they are fighting against.

This Department has in the past months illegally stripped the powers of the Heathfield High School's governing body and then gone ahead and advertise the principal's post ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Little, your time has expired.

Ms S LITTLE: ...at a departmental level. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon member Christians.

Mr F CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I am not going to respond to the mumbo-jumbo of the ANC who is losing voter support daily.

The people of the Western Cape ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr F CHRISTIANS: ...is opposed to the BELA Bill and this Bill will sink you.

Hon Speaker, the ACDP want to thank the Minister and the Department for the #BackOnTrack programme, for the Rapid School Build Programme, because it is making a difference, but, hon Speaker, the question I want to ask the Minister, I believe, the ACDP believes not every child is receiving the quality education they deserve.

We also welcome the additional finances when it comes to the school resource officers, but as I said in the Standing Committee, Elswood High School in Elsies River is under enormous attack when it comes to safety, and when I visited the school the other day they came down. 2021 they had a 86% pass rate in Matrics. It came down 2022 to 70% and last year it was 45%, and when I went to the school they told me about the safety concerns in the school.

So I want to plead to the Minister when they look at additional school resource officers, that they look at the most vulnerable areas. Our learners are not safe.

Lastly, hon Speaker, I want to say that I want to compliment the Department for what they are doing, but I know with the in-year budget cuts it is killing the Department and they cannot be blamed for that. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Christians. I now recognise the hon member Baartman.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker.

Today we debate the Education Vote, boasting a R30,8 billion budget, up from the R29,8 billion last year. A budget that is truly doing everything it can to stretch every rand as far as possible.

There are 1,2 million learners in public ordinary schools in the Western Cape, up from 1,18 million learners in 2022.

- 668 186 learners have benefitted from the Department's no-fee policy, or if you prefer the statistic, 54,76%.
- 511 777 learner have benefited from the nutrition programme, or 41,94%.
- You have 94 000 learners who are benefiting as fee-exemption beneficiaries.

- 65 775 learners are transport beneficiaries from this Department.
- 22 237 learners are subsidised in independent schools because not everyone who goes to an independent school is able to necessarily afford it.

Regarding the National School Nutrition Feeding Programme, the Western Cape also tops up the respective programme's funding with provincial funding for targeted learners in Quintile 4 and 5 schools, because as we all know in terms of the criteria that is published in the conditional grants, it only allows us to fund the lower Quintile schools.

Hon Speaker, in 2023, 17 816 learners arrived from other provinces and countries to the Western Cape schools. 13 780 of these originated from the Eastern Cape, that is 77,35%. Over the period 2019 to 2023, and members can look this up in the APP as well, on pages 24, 36 and 30, 101 824 entered our system from other provinces and countries. Of this figure it was 79 801 learners who originated from the Eastern Cape, which was 78,37% over that particular period.

Everyone deserves quality education, hon Speaker, even if you are from a different province and we welcome those who seek it, but respectfully, the money must follow the feet and this needs to be taken into account by both Department of Basic Education and the National Treasury when allocating funding for education to provinces, as substantive increases in migration are

putting a strain on the education system.

Just because we are entering into an education system does not necessarily mean that the money is already there, already budgeted for the extra learner, and in order to provide quality education for every learner that is entering our system, the National Treasury must take this into account in the Provincial Equitable Share.

Hon Speaker, Education is a big department and it is personnel heavy, so before I get into some of the departmental programme budgets it is important to note that of this R30,8 billion we will be spending R22,3 billion just on personnel costs. That is 72,31% of the full budget.

The Infrastructure Development Programme sub-category is allocated R2,3 billion. So once you have subtracted this from the main allocation the Department has to achieve everything that it needs to achieve with only R6,2 billion left.

This Budget Vote will further see R4 million for each year of the MTEF for the After-School MOD Programme, as well as an almost R80 million allocated over the MTEF for school resource officers, bringing this to 64.

We will further be spending in this Vote R67,9 million in 2024 financial year, R70,97 million in the 2025 financial year and R74,1 million in the 2026 financial year on the After-School MOD Feeding Scheme, which is additional

to the nutritional programme funding which we are receiving and an additional to what we are topping up from the provincial reserves.

In terms of the Infrastructure Programme more than R6,1 billion has been earmarked over the 2024 MTEF over the three financial years, and of this R74 million is earmarked for LED lighting and R300 million is allocated for Energy School Solar Photovoltaic Programmes.

The Infrastructure Programme aims to build the six new schools and 300 additional classrooms, and we welcome this announcement by the Minister.

Further I just want you to note, if National Treasury says that you have provisionally received an allocation of R2,5 billion for rapid build, this means National Treasury has confidence in the Western Cape to build infrastructure, because this is separate to what you are seeing in the budget.

This is similar to when provinces, such as the Eastern Cape, did not spend their full Infrastructure Budget and those budgets from the other provinces were given to Gauteng and the Western Cape Provinces. A budget at that time, an additional budget which the ANC objected towards, but National Treasury felt actually Western Cape knows how to build schools. So it is actually quite disappointing that the ANC does not support the Rapid Build School Programme.

The Education Budget will further be topped up with R345 million from the

Provincial Revenue Fund and, hon Speaker, I do not need to tell you how we have had to really dig into our reserve funds over the past year as a province across departments in order to stabilise the provincial budget to protect frontline services and to ensure we continue building on the good work that we are doing.

The WCED is further committed to improving our Mathematics and Language rates in our Grade 3 scores and our 2023 systemic test results revealed there is significant gains in Grade 3. They scored, Grade 3 in the previous years, Mathematics pass rate increased by 4,3 percentage points, Grade 3 Language pass rate increased by 4 percentage points and the pass rates for Mathematics and Language in Grade 6 and 9 have also increased between 1 and 1,7 percentage points. It shows that early intervention, such as allocation of extra time to reading and Mathematics in the school day, makes a difference.

Further the #BackOnTrack programme, which will be allocating R292 million, targeting 338 000 learners, we welcome this.

Further we wish to salute and acknowledge the hard work and perseverance of our educators, our support and administrative staff, parents and most important of all our students. 2023 saw the Western Cape once again improving its Matric pass rate, it was an increase. Whether it is under the national average does not mean that there was a decrease, it was an increase from the previous year, and it achieved the highest ever number of Bachelors passes.

These achievements are especially impressive given the fact that taxi violence and wildcat strikes disrupted education in many parts of the province this past year, further compounding learning losses suffered under the COVID year.

We saw pass rates of 75,4% in Physical Science and 82,2% in Mathematics, the highest in the country, but I also just want to speak about the dropout rates in the Western Cape and in the country. The real national Matric pass rate, hon Speaker, is 55,3% due to pupils who are dropping out between the Grade 10 and 12 years. The Western Cape Matric pass rate outperforms seven other provinces, surpassing that national pass rate by 4,5% in real terms.

The Western Cape has the lowest dropout rate of students at 26%. It is still too much, but it means that you are more likely to finish matric in the Western Cape than any other province.

Further, hon Speaker, in the National Conditional Grants that we are receiving for education in the Western Cape, we are going to be experiencing a reduction of 10,98% in the learners who have found Intellectual Disability Grants and a reduction of 29,46% in the Social Sector Expanded Public Works Programme Incentive Grant, but, hon Speaker, I just want to quickly touch on some of the percentages that were mentioned in terms of grant infrastructure, grant allocation from the National Department.

Now when it comes to Mathematics we see these percentages on page 178 and I must admit sometimes it can be difficult to interpret some of these figures, but I want us to go through it.

In Infrastructure the main allocation for the Infrastructure Grant that we received from National in the beginning of last year, was R1,2 billion. Then there was a budget cut and it was cut to R1,1 billion. Now we are getting R1,3 billion. So it is not a 15% increase, it is a 15% increase after the budget cut. It is actually more or less an 8% increase because the increase is according to the Main Budget. That 15% increase we have to put in there because we have to indicate the change from the revised estimate and the revised estimate was after the budget cut that we received mid-year last year.

In the ECD one I want to mention the ECD amount was R100 million that we were originally allocated, and I am reading from the book, 178. If we want to read, because leaders are readers. So R100 million for ECD. Then the budget was cut by R14 million to approximately R86 million. Now we add R124 million.

So, yes, it looks fancy when it is written there 44,54%, but it is actually not a R40 million increase. It is actually a R20 million increase from the original amount before the ECD budget was cut.

Then when we look at the HIV Grant and we are reading together here as

colleagues today. The HIV and AIDS Grant was R18 million and I am actually going to mention the full amount here because this one makes a big difference, R18 071 000. Then it was cut to R14 983 000, okay? So that was almost a R4 million cut.

Now we get back to the Main Budget this year, it is R18 923 000. That is almost just a R900 000 increase. So when you make the actual calculation it is not 26,3%, it is actually an 18th of the original amount.

So when you look at the EPWP one, for example, it was R2,1 million. Then it was cut to R1,9 million. So now we are at 2,2. So we are not even talking about inflation increases here, hon Speaker.

Now let us quickly get to the Math, Science and Technology Grant. The Math, Science and Technology Grant was R37 million in the beginning. Then it was cut to R32 million at the end of the year. We are now back at R38 million and between that difference, if I can make a quick calculation, it is probably about, you know, 750, R800 000 difference. So it is not a 15% increase, it is probably more like an 8% increase if you divide it by two since – yes, but I am sure that, you know, I do not need to ask members to assist with reading the [Inaudible]

So we are going to now deal with some of the other allocations. Further R224,7 million has been allocated over the 2024 MTEF to the Western Cape Education Department to respond to the needs of autism spectrum learners

and support the placements of these learners in school, and R221,4 million is allocated over the 2024 MTEF to ensure appropriate education access for learners with profound and intellectual disabilities. This includes the provision for upskilling, caregivers, nutritional support and funding for institutions, and we welcome the announcement of the Minister of the 30 extra classrooms in the existing schools.

Further, hon Speaker, I just quickly want to speak just a little bit about admissions. So most parents would already know hopefully or there has been media statements on it from different aspects, that the admissions window for 2025 school year has opened on 11 March 2024 and Grades 1 and 8 will be dealt with in the first window, which will close on 12 April 2024.

Parents who wish to apply for Grade R or a transfer between schools in Grade 2 to 7 and Grades 9 to 12, will be able to apply in the second admissions window between 1 August 2024 and 16 August 2024. It is important that we encourage the parents and guardians with children entering these grades to get their documents in order if their window is coming up and to apply as soon as possible.

Now, hon Deputy Speaker, some of the Opposition members have mentioned that placement is a crisis. Now on 14 March 2024 when we were before the Education Committee and the question was asked on this day how many learners are unplaced? The number was 10.

Now in the APP on page 24, if members did not know, there are 1 220 777 learners currently in public ordinary schools in the Western Cape. Now if we compare 10 to 1,2, yes, every child deserves quality education in the Western Cape, and the Minister and the HOD have committed to ensuring that every single learner gets placed. Some learners take a little bit longer than others, depending on their particular personal circumstances, but the commitment has been made that every learner will be placed. Ten is unfortunately not a crisis. It is important we must look at it, we must make sure that the commitment is being held accountable, but 10 is not a crisis.

Further, hon Speaker, I just want to brag from the Education Committee's side about something historic that has happened in the past week. Last week Wednesday was the first time ever, ever that a Legislature invited the constitutional body, the Financial and Fiscal Commission, the FFC, based on the constitutional provisions of Section 214(2), dealing with Equitable Share, it is 220 to 222 of the Constitution dealing with the establishment, and Section 3 of the FFC Act, to brief a provincial legislature on essentially a non-money bill or a non-finance legislation.

The FCC briefed the WCPP Education Committee on the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill or called the BELA Bill, on the costing or proposed costing on the BELA Bill. At the time when I moved the resolution it was so that we may receive such an independent view on what the BELA costing implications may look like for our country because responsible financing and costing is important.

Further, hon Speaker, I think it is important for this House to note that at last week Friday's meeting on 22 March of the Education Committee on the costing and the funding of the Bill, the National Department of Education admitted that their costing is off by several billion rand and that the Department has no clear answer on how the Bill would be costed.

In addition to this the Department was unable to sufficiently answer the question of where the funding would come from, or even if the funds are even available. The DBE representative confirmed that the Bill's costing does not account for several costs which will be incurred should BELA become law. These costs, which the Department has not yet considered and which are not included in the Bill's memorandum, as per the Section 35 of the PFMA and Section 195 of the Constitution when it comes to how public funding and legislation is dealt with, includes the following:

- It includes increased learner/teacher support materials. Not been costed for.
- Increased learner transport. Not been costed for.
- Additional nutrition. Not been costed for.
- Special education needs education including assistive devices. Not been costed for.

- Increased administrative cost. Not been costed for.

When you create infrastructure also for things like ECDs and Grade Rs, you also need things like ablution facilities that are age appropriate. Hon Speaker, do we think this has been costed for it? No, it has not. It is not in the [Inaudible], it is not in the Bill's memorandum, and it is nowhere in any presentation that we have seen so far, and quite frankly it is my view that the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Report on the Bill is thus fundamentally flawed.

National Treasury even wrote us a letter to essentially in the nice English and using all of the fancy Section 35 language, to say this is not our baby, ask DBE how much this will cost. The DBE's representative further stated that the total cost of BELA will stand at an estimated R15 billion.

Now, hon Speaker, this is very difficult to understand because when the members of the Committee raised the fact that the FFC had stated that the cost of the Bill, from their calculations, would be R17,7 billion to implement, the departmental officials then admitted that costs would have to be reconsidered. This was further in contrast to the Bill's current memorandum estimating financial implications for the State to the value of R17,26 billion, excluding provisions for the home education assessment cost.

Now for those who do not know, when you introduce a Bill, if you are a Minister and you introduce a Bill, you also have to tell people when you are

introducing the Bill, what the financial implications for the State is. You are not actually allowed to introduce a Bill without that in the Bill.

Departmental officials also admitted that the costing has been done on the implementation of compulsory Grade 8, relies on an estimate of one educator for every 40 Grade R students. So the National Government has based the costing of the BELA Bill for Grade R on 1:40 learners, which is how they got to apparent the R17,7 billion, which the FFC also essentially called, and I quote: "Naïve."

As was noted in the meeting this would violate the minimum norm of one educator for every 35 learners, and it is far off the current average of one educator for every 29 learners.

Furthermore the DBE representatives confusingly claimed that there would be no costing for the new provisions surrounding home schooling in the Bill, contradicting the paragraph in the financial implications to the State in the Bill's memorandum itself.

While it is clear the DBE could not adequately answer how the Bill would be costed, it was also unable to answer the question of where the funding for the Bill would come from. The Department previously referred the Committee to National Treasury, who responded with a letter then inferring to the Bill as an unfunded mandate and stating clearly that the Department of Basic Education bore the responsibility for the Bill's costing.

In Friday's meeting the Department's representatives could not describe how the funding for the Bill would be made available, stating that:

"The Minister of Finance needs to look into things if they intend to pass the Bill."

And:

"The DBE cannot be accountable structure to defend whether there will be money or no money."

With this in mind the Committee then took a resolution to request that Minister Godongwana, Minister of Finance, give a firm and final answer on the costing and the funding of the Bill, because, hon Speaker, BELA's maths are not matching. †Die boeke klop nie. [The books don't add up.] [Interjections.]

National Department of Education admitted that they do not have a firm idea on how the Bill will cost to implement [Interjections.] and they have not considered the cost of matters such as these learner/teacher support materials, the learner transport, the nutritional programme, the special needs education and costing of living adjustments for education. [Interjections.] It was not introduced by a Minister.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): They further could not answer exactly where the funding for the Bill comes from, it seems that the DBE is essentially asking the public for a blank cheque to implement this Bill with no end in sight to the cost.

So I am pleased that the Committee made this unanimous resolution to request the Minister of Finance to come and account for the funding of this Bill, but further, hon Speaker, I need to indicate that yesterday morning and this morning the Education Committee had to have extraordinary meetings. It is not usual for committees to be sitting during Budget Vote days. It is not usual for us to be dealing with non-budget matters during the budget week and this decision was made out of necessity and the response to the NCOP's refusal to grant a much needed request for extension of the deadline for the mandate on the Bill.

These requests were made and I am going to just read out and this has also been incorporated into the Negotiating Mandate Report. These requests were made on 26 January 2024, 8 February 2024, 18 March, 20 March and again yesterday on 26 March. The Committee then received no feedback on the contents of the letters. Instead the one letter we received was a copy and paste of all of the legislation currently before the NCOP.

As has been expressed in the Committee's mandate which it sat with this morning, the Committee took the view that this refusal excludes and marginalises the voices of the public and in particular the Western Cape's

largest constituency, the Cape Metro, a public hearing which is still coming up on 4 April and as at 20 March the Committee had reached an unprecedented number of written and oral submissions on the Bill. There has been so far more than 5 200 submissions received across WhatsApp, emails and online channels, and more than 2 700 people have so far attended public hearings on this Bill so far.

Due to a packed parliamentary programme the final two public hearings, both to be held in Cape Town, could only be scheduled for 4 April, this falling after the negotiating mandate deadline of 27 March 2024, but well before the final mandate deadline of 17 April 2024.

Now, hon Speaker, I just, you know, coming back to the mathematics part of things. When you take 27 March and you calculate it to 17 April, you will find there are 13 business days or three calendar weeks. So with all of the submissions that have been made across the country, if there are 5 200 submissions in the Western Cape, if my assumption, if I base my assumption that people in other provinces are as interested in this Bill as they are in the Western Cape, I cannot fathom how you are able to get through all of those submissions in three weeks before the final mandate, but not even allow the Western Cape to then conclude its final public hearing on the 4th, and maybe do a negotiating mandate on in the week of the 8th. [Interjections.]

An extension was then requested in these five separate letters as early as January.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): This request ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): ...does not address any of the respective correspondence that we have sent. In the absence of the agreement to extend the deadline the Committee then recorded today that under duress – yes, hon Speaker, under duress it submits its negotiating mandate, noting that the mandate is incomplete as it does not contain the full views of the public and the Committee voted to provisionally not support the Bill, with the ANC submitting a minority view to support the Bill.

Now, hon Speaker, irrespective of what you believe in terms of the respective clauses of the Bill, as Legislatures, as lawmakers, it cannot be that we are okay with a Bill being so procedurally, legally and constitutionally flawed that we are okay with the NCOP actually just saying, "You are a mosquito, we are just going to swat you off in terms of recognising you as a province."

The Committee further resolved to continue its public hearings in Cape Town in order to fulfil its legal and constitutional obligation to the people of the Western Cape, as well as to submit and supplement the provisional negotiating mandate with all submissions received up to date and including

4 April.

The Committee further resolved that should an extension not be received, that it would meet to consider whether any legal recourse is available on this matter and we are currently awaiting feedback on the matter from the NCOP as I am standing here quite frankly.

The Committee, hon Speaker, is navigating uncharted legal and constitutional waters. It has truly been an historic week for the Education Committee in the WCPP, both the bad and the good, but make no mistake, hon Speaker, given the current constitutional and legal considerations the DA is ready to go to battle on BELA.

Hon Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying that in the Education Committee you are not necessarily going to see every single little agenda item that we put on the programme because a lot of our meetings are unannounced oversight visits. So you might randomly see on a programme a district that we might be heading to and then by the time we get there, then you will find out essentially which schools more or less we will be visiting.

So it is a lot of work that does not always go noticed by everyone, but I want to thank the respective Committee members. Hon member Sayed, hon member Christians, hon member Fry, hon member Poole. There has been some changes to the Committee as well, so for all the, what I consider the permanent alternates as well, previous hon member Kama and hon member

Gillion Bosman, I also want to thank them for the interest. Hon member Brinkhuis also frequently comes to the Committee. I want to thank them for their interest and for their robust engagement in this particular committee.

I want to thank the Minister just for always not being afraid to be held accountable and for truly being honest in both our achievements and the things that we need to improve upon, because everything is not perfect, but we must make sure that we are always improving, that we are always trying to make sure that every single rand stretches as far as possible.

I want to thank the HOD, HOD Walters, and the departmental officials. It is not easy dealing with a department that has so many other personnel and I think, if I remember correctly, there is about 47 000 personnel, staff in this particular Department.

Hon Speaker, I also want to thank our procedural officer, Ms Hassen-Moosa, and the Education Committee for a truly astute procedural knowledge and advice, and because there is no debate for budget, it is only declarations, so I just want to take the opportunity to also thank the procedure officer, Ms Kamish-Achmat in Budget also for her astute procedural advise. It is sometimes a thankless job as staff members to make sure that all the T's are crossed and all the I's are dotted, and to the senior officials, Mr Daza and Ms Cloete, sometimes we run out of English and we do not know necessarily where to go in terms of procedure and legal advice, and you are always there for us and I say thank you for that.

To our research team that I work with on the 5th floor quite closely, particularly the researchers assigned to my portfolios, Mr Ryan Hand and Robert Moore, I just want to say thank you so much. It is you, you keep me on my toes and you make sure that everything that we do is not only fact checked, but that we have the highest quality of work that we are able to present in everything that we do. I always laugh because one of the things I have noticed over the years, especially in Budget, is people enjoy poaching my budget researchers. So I want to say thank you to every single previous Budget and Education researcher that is not necessarily with us anymore, but has been poached by more fervent opportunities and endeavours in life. I know of at least two that are in executive offices, one that has gone to the National Parliament in a political office and one that has gone to an international organisation. So I just want to say thank you to all of them.

Hon Speaker, I want to end off by thanking my team in my constituency. I can truly say that I have an amazing team of people that I work with and my constituency is far, hon Speaker, it is not around the corner, it is not a place I can be at every single day.

So to Ms Aletta Theron, Ms Lindie Potgieter and Ms Juliet Pieterse, I could not do the work here without you. I, you know, despite popular belief, I do not actually reside in Laingsburg. I have a constituency that is allocated to Laingsburg and I can truly say we have achieved remarkable things over the past five years, and from this budget alone, something that we really love it

for and really worked hard towards, was getting Laingsburg High School to become a no-fee school.

So I am proud that that is something that has been achieved in the past five years and I just want to also say thank you to this Department that over this term that we also received smart classrooms in the Acacia Primary School, as well as – well, it is not in this particular budget, but it affects the two schools in Laingsburg, receiving the free Wi-Fi hotspot from the Premier's Department in both the Primary School of Acacia and the Laingsburg High School, and I have no doubt come 2026 that the people of Laingsburg will vote for people who care, who have giant hearts and will fight valiantly for their constituents.

Hon Speaker, the DA supports this Vote. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Baartman. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Speaker.

To recap, particularly for the benefit of one hon member that was not present, we tabled a massive R30,85 billion budget for Education in the Western Cape and as I have said this is the largest budget for Education that we have ever tabled and the largest budget of any department in our province, and of course with this budget we aim to improve learning outcomes, to expand

access to education and of course to develop the resilience in our schools.

I would like to begin by thanking the hon member Deidre Baartman for her contribution to the debate and of course respond to some of the points made by other members.

Unfortunately unlike the hon member Ferlon Christians, I am obliged to respond to some of the mumbo-jumbo, especially from the hon member Khalid Sayed.

Let us begin with the Matric pass rates.

- Well, the Western Cape pass rate in fact increased again to 81,54%. The top Mathematics pass rate at 75,4% and we got the top Physical Science pass rate at 82,2%.
- We got the second highest distinction rate with 24 982 subject distinctions.
- Our Quintile 1 pass rate increased to 72%.
- Our Quintile 2 pass rate increased to 77,5%.
- Our Quintile 3 schools increased to 78%.
- We got the top candidate in the country, the top candidate in

Mathematics, the top candidate with special education needs, the top candidates in Quintile 5 and the second placed candidate in South African Language.

All this was symbolised by the results from COSAT, a school in Khayelitsha, where I celebrated the 2023 Matric pass rates, with a Mathematics pass rate of 99%, a Physical Science pass rate of 91,3%. 107 distinctions, including 10 distinctions in Mathematics, including three candidates who got over 90% for Mathematics and four Physical Science distinctions.

Now, hon Speaker, we achieved all that. We achieved all that with a retention rate of 69,3%. We are simply not willing in this province to increase the dropout rate so that we look better in the league tables, because that would mean that thousands of Matrics would not have a chance to write their examination because at the end of the day we care about every learner here in the Western Cape.

On the question of unplaced learners, we have in fact, we have in fact placed all our Grade 1 and 8 applicants for 2024. Of course if and when any additional learners arrive we will place them too. The majority of the learners for whom placement was delayed were brand new applications only arriving this year to apply for the current school year. Incredibly, despite nearly 3 500 extremely late applications, we have placed them before the end of the first term.

On the question of the online admission system. It allows us in fact to be more efficient in allocating resources to areas of highest demand and more importantly to weed out illegal practises where schools ask for inappropriate information. The site is zero-rated and does not use data. It also reduces the burden on parents as they do not need to go individually to each school they apply to, and of course tens of thousands of parents apply online without incident and of course we set up dozens of pop-up application points for those parents who do not have access to the internet.

On the question of infrastructure spending. We are in fact spending 100% of our Infrastructure Budget and we are building more schools faster than ever before in our province. In fact, in fact, hon Speaker, we are so efficient in our infrastructure spending that the National Treasury allocated an extra R115 million in other provinces' unspent Education Infrastructure Grant funding last year, which of course, if hon members recall, the hon member Khalid Sayed opposed in this House, and in fact it goes further.

We are so efficient at spending infrastructure that we have received, as I mentioned in my speech, an additional provisional allocation of R2,5 billion to support the Rapid School Build Programme so that we can build more schools faster in poor communities here in the Western Cape.

Now, hon Speaker, the hon member Khalid Sayed expresses outrage, outrage that the Programme 7 examination and related services has been cut by 39,65%, but what he does not realise is that this arises from the fact that

National Government, National Government has not made an allocation this year for the Presidential Youth Employment Programme.

Now this once again arises as a result of the hon member simply not doing his homework, which, as you recall, hon Speaker, is an issue that I have raised consistently. It is a persistent pattern and despite my recommendation, hon Speaker, to you to instruct the hon member to write down, "I must do my homework," 100 times, this pattern has persisted for five years. Perhaps this is something we can work on in the next term with the support of the Western Cape Education Department.

On the question of libraries, with respect, hon member, I am not responsible for libraries and this is perhaps an issue that you may want to discuss with my colleague, the hon member Anroux Marais, or indeed the City of Cape Town.

On Heathfield High School we are squarely focused, squarely focused on teaching and learning. We have appointed a curator principal who, with the school management, has developed some very specific interventions to address learning losses and we can see improvements already in attendance and learner participation.

To the hon member Ferlon Christians, we share your concern of course about safety at our schools, which is precisely why we will be investing an additional R57,5 million this year to address safety challenges and we

certainly take note and will pay attention to the challenges at the school you mentioned.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion. Despite the significant budget cuts we have tabled today a budget to improve learning outcomes, to expand access to education and of course to develop resilience in our schools.

I would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Education, especially the hon member Deidre Baartman for your engagement with our Department. We value your frankness and your willingness to engage with us when any problems are brought to your attention. We do not always agree, but I really do appreciate your support of our efforts to provide quality education for every learner in every classroom in every school here in the Western Cape. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote.

Hon members, before I suspend for lunch can I please ask that those members who have not yet participated in the members survey that has been circulated for the 2022, 2023, 2024 financial year, to please assist and do that. That helps us to address some of the concerns raised by the hon member Lekker last night in our debate speech, and then, hon member, with your indulgence, if we can resume the Sitting at 14:55, so which provides you with a lunch opportunity of 45 minutes.

Hon Members, the House is suspended.

[House is suspended at 14:09]

START OF VOTE 3

[Business of House paused for clearing of bays.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. We are going to now read the next Order. May I ask the Secretary to please proceed?

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 12: Economic Development and Tourism – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2024].

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Secretary. I recognise the hon Minister Wenger.

The MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:
Thank you again, hon Deputy Speaker, members and residents.

It was Lewis Carroll who said that:

"If you do not know where you are going, any road will do."

And here in the Western Cape we do know where we are going because not any road will do. Every day, every month and every year we take determined action to enable the growth of the Western Cape economy so that we can play our part in building a Western Cape that works for all and so that more and more people from across our province, country and world can enjoy our exceptional destination and province.

We are hard at work to grow jobs for all because we know that with action, with strategic planning and expert execution, we take more steps forward to creating a future full of hope, of opportunity in our province where our people have what they need to succeed, because we know that when our people succeed so will this province and so will the whole of South Africa, and so it gives me great pleasure to table before this House the 2024 Main Budget for the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, a Department which sits at the very centre of many of our programmes to grow jobs and grow our economy in every corner of the province and reach every resident in the province so that we can enable the private sector from small, medium and micro enterprises, particularly in the township and informal economy, to our larger investors, to all thrive.

We will continue to push forward, guided by our economic action plan, Growth for Jobs, so we can enable breakout economic growth and a trillion rand jobs rich, inclusive, sustainable, diverse and thriving provincial economy that is growing at between 4 and 6% in real terms by 2035.

We will work to entice more and more tourists to visit our world class destination, helping to spread economic benefits and job creation across the length and breadth of the Western Cape and we will work for you, the residents of the Western Cape, to build a better future for all, and, hon Deputy Speaker, we have every reason to continue to push forward, to keep building a Western Cape that works for all because we have seen the positive impact that our programmes are having on the economy and on job creation in the province.

The Western Cape is a province where more people have jobs. The Western Cape has the lowest unemployment rate in South Africa at 20,4% and those that do not have a job yet have not given up on finding a job because they know that more than any other province in South Africa, it is the Western Cape that they have the best chance of finding a job.

In fact between Quarter 4 of 2019 and Quarter 4 of 2023, 4 out of 5 net jobs created in South Africa were created right here in the Western Cape. Four out of 5. These achievements have not happened by chance, luck or by wishing. These jobs help our residents succeed as the result of determined action.

Having the lowest unemployment rate in the country, the lowest expanded unemployment rate, the highest absorption rate and the highest labour force participation rate in South Africa, is the result of determined action, meticulous planning and data-led and evidence-based policymaking. It is

proof of what can be achieved when we work with private sector partners.

I am greatly encouraged to see that the private sector agrees that this province is far more business friendly than South Africa and all other provinces. This is borne out by the latest RMB/BER business confidence index, which showed a 3 point uptick Western Cape's Business Confidence Index from Quarter 4 of 2023 to Quarter 1 of 2024, improving from 37 points to 40 points. Remember this number: 40, out of a possible 100.

This is the third consecutive increase in the Western Cape's Business Confidence Index and the longest sustained increase in private sector confidence since 2018. It is telling that the Western Cape Business Confidence Index far exceeds provincial counterparts. Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal, who are at 23 and 18 points respectively for this period.

The Western Cape is showing resilience to national challenges clearly shown by the divergences from the declining national trend. The same kind of trend can also be seen in our very impressive tourism numbers. Without a doubt we know where we are going and the Western Cape is a destination in demand. I, as many of you, have also celebrated the significant awards that streamed in last year, which include Cape Town being voted as the greatest City on Earth, and South Africa is the greatest country on Earth by the UK's 2023 Telegraph Travel Awards.

According to this 36th edition of *Conde Nast* Readers' Choice Awards, which

celebrates excellence in global tourism and hospitality, 14 out of 15, that is 93%, of the best hotels in Eastern and Southern Africa are based right here in the Western Cape. [Interjections.]

World Travel Awards Africa also crowned eight Western Cape-based tourism and hospitality as winners, including Cape Town International Airport as Africa's leading airport for 2023; the Cruise Terminal at the Port of Cape Town as Africa's ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...cruise port, and Pezula Nature Hotel and Spa as Africa's leading sports resort, just to name a few.

This is on top of Air Access, powered by Wesgro, which since 2015 has landed 10 new African destinations into Cape Town, including Addis Ababa, Harare, Victoria Falls, Maun, Maputo, Livingstone, Kigali, Nairobi, and since June last year to Eswatini and Lusaka. This brings the total cross-border African destinations served out of Cape Town to 15, with 11 operating airlines in addition to the province's other global destinations.

This small but excellent Air Access team recently won the coveted Routes World Destination Award for a second year in a row. [Interjections.] These awards amplify the province's reputation as a destination of choice for

international tourists in every category and our tourism numbers speak plainly. From the fantastic recovery of the tourism sector, which has now surpassed pre-pandemic levels, through to Cape Town International Airport processing the most number of passengers ever with a record-breaking 317 000 passengers in December of 2023 to 2,8 million two-way international passengers passing through the airport in 2023. [Interjections.]

The latest data shows that for every 100 international tourists to the Western Cape, R2,1 million in direct tourist spend is generated, contributing R500 000 to the Provincial Gross Domestic Product and enabling two local jobs and supporting the movement of R1,4 million worth of air cargo.

None of these record-breaking achievements have happened by chance and none are possible without the love and hard work of our local tourism industry, the curiosity and trust of our precious tourists and the determination of this department, its entities and partners. It is the result of coordinated, collaborative and very purposeful plans followed by action, despite severe binding constraints mainly due to National Government's inaction and failures which has led to crumbling national infrastructure, crippling loadshedding, a broken visa regime and a job killing logistics crisis.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we know we are on the right path to growth and it means we are meticulously planning with deep local understanding because we know that with jobs comes dignity, hope and the promise of a better future for every person across this province, most especially the poor and the

vulnerable and those residents outside of our main hub in Cape Town.

Which is why we will continue to focus strategically on creating opportunities through investment, stimulating market growth through exports and domestic markets, improved access to economic opportunities and employability with a focus on entrepreneurship and skills development while protecting consumers in line with our legislative mandate and continuing to make sure that it is as easy as possible to do business in the Western Cape. To do this a total of R480,24 million will be allocated to DEDAT in 24/25.

We are driving growth opportunities through investment, which has resulted in an estimated 3 075 jobs enabled through inward foreign direct investment, and between 2019 and 2022 the SMME Booster Fund assisted 920 businesses. We know how hard it is for SMMEs to keep running when the power is turned off and so DEDAT has supported 56 businesses through demand-driven responses in the municipal Energy Resilience Initiative, including installing solar PV systems at trading hubs across the province. In Drakenstein at Arendsnes, at Wamkelekile in Villiersdorp, in Laingsburg, Oudtshoorn, Mossel Bay at D'Almeida and Kwanonqaba. We are working to keep the lights on for small businesses, particularly in townships.

We are also hard at work stimulating market growth through exports, including tourism as another vital aspect of boosting economic growth that will create jobs. It is impressive to see the value of our exports increased by 12%, from R166 billion in 2021 to R186 billion in 2022, and the trade

agreements secured by our Trade, Investment and Tourism Promotion Agency, Wesgro, reached a total value of R3,14 billion, resulting in 906 direct jobs during the 22/23 financial year.

To enable the growth of our tourism sector DEDAT registered an astounding 1 500 individuals as tourist guides and trained 89 tourist guides in 22/23. This is on top of supporting 139 beneficiaries with tourism safety services in 22/23 and an estimated 300 in the 23/24 financial year, and so to continue our work to enable a thriving provincial economy, integrated economic development services, including enterprise development, regional and local economic development, economic empowerment and red tape reduction programmes, will receive an allocation of R44,6 million in the 24/25 financial year.

For our Trade and Sector Development Programmes, including trade and investment promotion and sector development, we will allocate R92,88 million in the 24/25 financial year. This is a R10 million, or 12,5%, increase mainly related to the provision of support to assist firms to increase the value of exported products from the Western Cape and the implementation of the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism studies.

Wesgro Cape Trade Portal, which serves as an online marketplace and export resource centre and which now hosts 1 361 Western Cape exporters, 330 international buyers and 6 150 products, and is growing every day.

To continue our work to increase exports and increase the rand value of investment, to improve the ease of doing business and to boost resource resilience of our economy, the Economic Planning Programme will receive R98,7 million in the 24/25 financial year.

And finally for the Tourism, Arts and Entertainment Programme aimed at facilitating the growth of a safe and thriving tourism industry, which I have already shared so many wonderful accolades, we will allocate R73,63 million in the 24/25 financial year, primarily to fund the destination marketing activities with Wesgro.

Hon Deputy Speaker, another way in which we work to enable the private sector is making sure that we have a growing pool of talent. So we know we are going in the right direction for future generations too. Without skills economic growth is not possible and we cannot hope to take full advantage of the immense potential of our economy if we do not invest in the right qualifications, the right skills and the right experience for jobs available now and jobs of the future.

We know that our people are some of the warmest and hardest working in the world, which is why DEDAT works hard with various partners and stakeholders across all levels of government, as well as international partners, through our Skills Development Programmes to create more opportunities to upskill our young people in particular.

In 2022/23 almost 5 000 unemployed persons were transitioned into employment opportunities, as well as an estimated 4 200 young people so far in 2023/24 through our Skills Programmes.

Over the same period our Skills Programme has leveraged an impressive R201 million for skills development interventions in the 22/23 financial year, by working with other levels of government and the private sector and an estimated R60 million in 2023/24, but it is not good enough to only share the successes and what we know works well, because while we are hard at work enabling the private sector to do what they do best, creating and growing jobs in our economy, the reality is that we are equally hard at work to remove some of the barriers to their growth, and so we will continue our work to dramatically increase efficiency at the Port of Cape Town so that our sought after and proudly Western Cape goods can reach our key markets.

This includes increasing the capacity within the department to bolster its current work in coordinating the logistics value chain, including providing support to address the immediate challenges in the port through the port dashboard, through research relating to port performance, as well as the broader logistics strategy in the province.

Our Red Tape Reduction Unit continues to achieve notable successes in ripping up unnecessary bureaucracy that bogs businesses down. In the 22/23 financial year this impressive unit implemented 19 improvement measures to

business facing government services. In 2022/23 resolving 91% of business support cases in the same year.

One of the most important enablers that this unit works on is unblocking visa applications that are stuck in the National Home Affairs system, so that many more people can know with certainty that they can visit South Africa and the Western Cape, where they are warmly welcomed to attend weddings, film adverts, series and movies, and hire our talented crews, to exchange skills and ideas with our growing tech and investor sectors, and visit one of the greatest places on earth.

Examples include assisting 22 Chinese current and future clients with their visa applications to meet with a top-ranked Cape Town-based architectural design firm that employs over 300 people and which has architectural projects in nearly 100 countries and 200 cities worldwide.

The unit also assisted another international client with their application so they could spearhead and facilitate a training programme on behalf of a leading international hotel group for team members from more than 35 hotels across South Africa. The approval of the e-visa will ensure the transfer of skills to local employees, contributing to the personal development and growth of the hotel's employees, job creation and retention in South Africa, and securing vast international investments to ensure our hospitality industry can continue to deliver globally competitive services.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this unit also assisted the USA Masters Cricket Team by working to unblock their visa applications so that the team could participate in the International Masters Cricket over 40s Cricket World Cup that was held in Cape Town earlier this month, ensuring that the team could enjoy the oneness of the Western Cape and boosting the economic benefits of events tourism.

Finally hon Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to report that I have now formally established the Western Cape Consumer Affairs Tribunal and appointed its members. Consumer protection is an important matter the world over and ensures fair and responsible treatment of customers and ensures that customers can make informed decisions when purchasing and using products and services. The tribunal will be tasked with the adjudication of alleged unfair business practises that the office of the Consumer Protector has investigated. The tribunal will therefore act as a decision-making body and will be able to evaluate evidence submitted by the office of the Consumer Protector, the businesses, individuals or organisations involved in the proceedings.

The Western Cape Consumer Affairs Tribunal is therefore an important institution that will ensure that the rights of Western Cape consumers are enforced and protected. Chaired by Ms Lizanne Venter, I wish her and all members well in their important work for fairness in this province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the people of the Western Cape have seen firsthand the

rewards of our purposeful actions towards enabling a thriving, jobs rich, diverse, sustainable and thriving economy. We know where we are going and we will keep on our road to economic prosperity by working day and night, especially for the poor and the most vulnerable in our province, for jobs and a thriving, growing economy that is brimming with hope and opportunity.

With the budget allocated to DEDAT we will continue on our determined path for growth and jobs for all because we have even more work to do to lift people out of poverty, to increase opportunities for our residents and to deliver a better future for all. Thank you.

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

Ms N D NKONDLO: †Enkosi kwakhona sekelasomlomo. [Thank you, Deputy Speaker.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, esteemed colleagues and guests, on the occasion of this Parliamentary Sitting, allow me to applaud and welcome the passing of the Companies Amendment Bill [B 27-2023], that will require listed companies and SOEs to publicly disclose the wage gaps between the highest and lowest earners in their annual reports.

This clause and other gender empowerment clauses in the legislation will help gender economic empowerment advocates to access disaggregated data

on gender wage gap, inclusion of women in leadership positions. A conversation, you would recall, hon Deputy Speaker, was held some years ago under your leadership in this august House, with data that demonstrate the problem that still persist in our labour market.

This is a great milestone in the history of our democracy and whilst the DA, Freedom Front Plus and ACDP did not support this amendment, and we say to them as you slumber in the ultra-right-wing tendencies and sell out to the White establishment, let us tell you for free the train is moving. The ANC Government and South Africans are well on their way to redress the imbalances and brick-by-brick resetting the apartheid and its patriarchal architecture and so we hail †malibongwe. [Let's be blessed.] Never again in our lifetime that women will be paid salaries of a lesser value for the same work just because they are women.

Hon Deputy Speaker, today we are here to review and debate the budget proposals presented by the Minister to evaluate its suitability for our present circumstances and beyond. Let us look into the reality behind this budget and whether it truly serves the needs of all citizens, especially the poor and marginalised.

In an article titled:

"Global economy set for weakest half decade performance in 30 years."

It held that as the world nears the midpoint of what was intended to be a transformative decade for development, the global economy is set to rack up a sorry record by the end of 2024, which is the slowest half decade of GDP growth in 30 years.

Hon Deputy Speaker, due to the tightest financial conditions in decades, slow growth in the majority of big economies and sluggish global trade, the medium-term prognosis has become more bleak or dark for many developing economies, including South Africa.

Global growth is projected to slow for the third year in a row from 2,6% last year to 2,4% in 2024, almost three-quarters of a percentage point below the average of the 2010s. Developing economies are projected to grow just 3,9% more than 1 percentage point below the average of the previous decade. After a disappointing performance last year low income countries should grow 5,5%, weaker than previously expected. By the end of 2024 people in about one out of every four developing countries and about 40% of low income countries, will still be poorer than they were on the eve of the COVID pandemic in 2019. In advanced economies meanwhile growth is set to slow to 1,2% this year from 1,5 in 2023.

This report and others reveal the dangers of a post pandemic austerity shock, which is far more premature and severe than the one that followed the global financial crisis. The report goes on to present the instances of 189 countries

identified by the IMF, where 2025 budget cuts will take place and debt payments of more than R1,2 billion. I highlight these reports as they reveal a conclusive reality and which South Africans have to contend with in relation to global factors of our economic outlook.

The DA plays proxy, shouting loud in donating South African sovereignty and its domestic interest to the approval of their handlers, the conservatives and right wings in the US, in Israel and countries of the west.

We have brought ourselves to this point away from slavery, colonial and apartheid rule, and we will never allow to offer our country and its economy as a dowry for recolonisation and subjugation under the guise of foreign direct investment. We are equal partners in the practise of foreign policy driven by our domestic interest, whilst respecting the international common and collective good. Another forked tongue budget of the DA talking out of both sides of their blue mouth.

Hon Deputy Speaker, an amount of R45,3 billion has been allocated for Growth for Jobs over the 2024 MTEF budget. I am not sure, hon MEC, whether you have seen, I will share with you, there is an article in *Cape Times* today that says, title:

"Security companies struck, scramble to save 337 jobs."

It is alleged there is an irregular and unlawful exclusion of the applicants

from tender processes which may jeopardise 337 jobs. I am hoping through the G4J you would be able to try and save such jobs.

Further you spoke about Western Cape and Cape Town being the best tourism destination. I raised this matter during the State of the Province Address and almost my head was chopped off by the Deputy Chief Whip of the Ruling Party, when I expressed a concern of the tales of two cities, that, as we celebrate the achievements of this province, which is something that we do not deny, where there is positive and progress in the province, but we should caution you, colleagues, where you believe that the only facts is only those facts that are yours, and any experience outside of yourself, if you happen to go to Khayelitsha and you meet a Nandi you believe, based on the fact that such a Nandi will actually cleanse your conscience. You then believe that if any of them goes in the same Khayelitsha and meet a Thabiso and Thabiso has got a different experience to Nandi then it means, you know, such an experience of Thabiso must then, you know, be delegitimised.

This is something that we must caution you, colleagues, because these things that were raised here we are equal to you as public reps and we go to communities who have got the trust in us to bring these issues into this House, and when we do that we do that in good faith in raising these matters and yourselves we've got responsibility to ensure that you heed the call and stop looking at us as your opponents, because you try so hard to be perfect. We have not seen any person that is perfect because even Jesus Christ, who was perfect, who came in this planet, unfortunately he got himself to be

thrown with stones by the same human beings.

So I think I just want to caution you with this exceptionalism that you want to always try and present in this House. I am raising this because Zwai Bala an artist well-known in the country from PE, in Gordon's Bay, and I shared this with you. I shared it with the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, I shared it with the Premier, was called a *kaffer* in the same and a domestic [Interjections.] tourist who is trying to come and enjoy the very Cape Town that you are saying is applauded to be the best, how it would be best to Wamala and his family [Interjections.], who is South African, and comes to this particular province.

So you must also take into cognisance of the plight of the people like Zwai Bala] who, based on the colour of their skin, in the same province under your leadership they are still called, you know, some use hate speech against them because they believe that this particular part of the country, you know, is a privilege to themselves. So I am still waiting on your response, MEC, around this particular matter. [Interjections.]

I must say in your Growth for Jobs, which is an interesting revelation by yourselves as you exit this Administration, the question is what have you been doing in your portfolio for this five years for only to come up with a strategy and a budget of the Growth for Jobs only at the tail end of the term?

This proves what we have been raising about this Department, of

implementing a myriad of boutique projects that are not centre to any strategic goal and thus remain a very expensive keep busy. This is the legacy of the Premier as the MEC and his hoax township revitalisation strategy failed Pick n Pay township stores project at a cost of more than R20 million of taxpayers' money.

He made a daring announcement in this House, then boasting of launching these stores and only to run away when this not so well-thought experience became a disaster and left black women in the townships of the Cape Flats highly indebted and worse off from a venture that was jockeyed by this DA Government.

We are grateful to SCOPA that this matter has been confirmed as within mandate of SCOPA to investigate even in the next Administration, to hold accountable those who were part of this scam.

It is this ghost township revitalisation strategy that never existed, but was just an announcement of Minister Winde in the same portfolio you are in at the time. On numerous occasions we asked for a copy and never furnished with any as we were told it remained perpetually under review.

We must recognise and thank your leadership and that of HOD, that at least you have managed to reorientate and reposition at least this Department to have a strategy that hones the work that it does and coordinates it so that at least you can be able to measure it against some strategic outcome.

In the five years when this announcement has been made, again what is a concern which I have raised in the Committee is that there is no clarity about the township, nor broader informal economy cited as priority or pillars of the strategy. This is even against, once again, MERO repeatedly demonstrating that informal economy is amongst the sectors that is actually registering positive growth and jobs.

Instead in the Blue Book, page 606, the Department boldly states under the section:

"Main services and core functions."

That the primary focus of the G4J strategy is the enablement of private sector-led economic growth through creating a business environment conducive for growth. In the same paragraph the Department places key focus areas using words repeatedly like:

"Enable private sector-led economic growth."

Twice and:

"Support private sector-led economic growth."

In page 617, under:

"Export priority focus area, Wesgro Export Programme."

Is stated to follow as one of its key deliverables:

"A focus on trade support for larger companies in the Western Cape."

No mention of SMMEs, no informal sector, till you get to enterprise development. That is what this DA-led Department believes SMMEs qualifies for and township economy is only mentioned as sub-priority under employability priority.

We must hasten to inform you, hon Minister, that SMMEs and township entrepreneurs, including rural town businesses, do want to participate in the mainstream and also export programmes meaningfully, not as a charity case to just attend exhibitions and fairs, but to be equally supported as this Department and its entity is heavily invested in trade and export promotion for big business.

We have raised the issue of red tape and compliance burden of municipalities. Whilst we recognise what you have done to do permits for films and events, and we are asking that the same energy is invested for permitting regime that is very much easy and actually accessible for informal traders that are harassed on a day-to-day basis, trying to live in the

municipalities.

We must enquire, hon Minister, what is the baseline performance? Can you place to the South African citizens as residents of this province about the record of deliver? It is in the last Administration I must say under the Premier again as former Minister in the portfolio where a Provincial Strategic Goal (PSG) with Provincial Strategic Priorities was brandished as the magic wand for job creation and growth. Let me give you the numbers. PSG set a target of 318 000 jobs in 2014, up to 597 000 by 2019, but at the end of the Fifth Administration only 331 514 jobs were recorded as per the Annual Reports and APP and the PERO information.

The same PSG promised to deliver 200 artisans and technical qualifications in 2014, up to 10 000 by 2019, and only to achieve 400 artisan candidates, 135 graduates in systems and business analysis, including 400 youth in ICT propelled programme. DEDAT at the time promised 6 000 jobs to be facilitated from committed investment between 2015 to '20, and instead only achieved 4 793 and on skills set a target of 1 000 artisan and technical skills qualification, and only to achieve 119.

This overwhelming underachievement must be recalled so to alert the South African citizens in the Western Cape of the promises versus delivery of the DA Government, especially under Premier Alan Winde, who seem to lead by promises.

We further recall this performance history to ensure smart target setting and planning away from †ihaba le vote. [The battle of the vote.]

Also we caution this Department and advise as we did do the research work we did through the research unit of the WCPP, not of the ANC, early in this Administration to recommend and advise that the Department must build capacity to monitor job numbers against the very strategic economic sectors being identified in the G4J, but also build data sources to verify and authenticate the data to support the claim of this province job creation from direct programmes of this Government and Department versus other non-related economic activities of the economy.

VOTE 12 – continued

This attitude reflects and displays what was highlighted in the budget debate on Monday, confirming what Prof Dieter speaks about in his article when he makes the point that indeed, economics are in disarray. He shares his thoughts on how wealth is being redistributed in today's society. He explains that instead of money moving from the rich to the poor, as we might expect, it often seems to go the other way, from the poor to the rich.

This is a reflection on the changing dynamics of wealth distribution and when we make a noise, hon MEC, all you are asking is that the G4J must be one of the turnaround to try and ensure equitable wealth distribution so that also those that are on the periphery of the economy are able to participate and on their own, they can also be able to claim achievements. We remain steadfast

in our call for this Department ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Finish off, please.

Ms N D NKONDLO: ...to be intentional about driving an inclusive economy agenda that elevates the informal economy, townships, and small rural towns as key drivers of economic development. We do not support this Vote. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Nkondlo. I now recognise the hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape has the potential to eradicate poverty and unemployment and to do that, it will need a ...[Audio distorted.] of government that understands the needs of our people at large. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape has thousands of businesses which are currently operating in the informal sector. The majority of these businesses exist for purposes of sustenance of the owners, which is to barely put food on the table and nothing more. Hon Deputy Speaker, the majority of the owners of these businesses are normally not trained in the field of business. The business cannot employ anyone else other than its owner.

However, this must change, and the change must come in the form of Government empowerment of these businesses. Hon Deputy Speaker, if

Government can do that, if Government can do its job, then job creation ...[Audio distorted] be appreciated with big businesses as foreign direct investment, but it will be home-cultivated through the empowerment of small businesses.

What is needed is the formalisation of these informal businesses and training of their personnel. The Western Cape needs Government programmes which will begin by training informal business owners, assist them to register their businesses and then introduce a sustainable ...[Audio distorted.] in which these business owners can apply for assistance for their businesses after granting them funding.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the reason why programmes such as Pick 'n Pay modernisation programmes failed in the Western Cape is due to the lack of proper oversight and guidance over these businesses once funding has been provided to them. Oversight over these businesses should run between 12 to 24 months, depending on the needs of each business and this is where Government must be active. Because as things stand now, Government, though it is funded through the public private sector partnership, introduced funding to these startup businesses and they leave them on their own while setting them for failure in the process so that when they fail, Government can turn around and say poor people cannot run businesses so we must close up shop.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the formalisation of informal businesses in the province

has a potential to create most job opportunities and add to the country's gross domestic product. We need businesses which will begin by being informal and end up as exporters of goods and services to the world, and this is only possible if the Provincial Government can stretch out a helping hand.

In conclusion, before that happens, hon Deputy Speaker, the EFF will not be supporting this Vote. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Cassiem. I now recognise the hon Little.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Whilst a few of us in this room will argue the point that the National Government has been plagued by corruption and this has adversely affected the entire country, the DA-led Provincial Government tries to justify all of its own failures on the incompetence of the National Government. They try to lay claim to all successes, even when the National Department has been instrumental in the success they claim as their own.

A good example of this is when the Provincial Government lays claim to their employment opportunities that are created by the increase in numbers of tourists that walk through customs at Cape Town International Airport. The truth is that the National Tourism Department led by a GOOD party leader, Patricia de Lille, has been instrumental and in actual fact, has spearheaded the campaign that has seen the increased number of visitors not only in the

Western Cape, but in cities across South Africa. The fact that the City of Cape Town might have seen more of its share of those numbers is more attributable to God and Mother Nature than the Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town can take credit for. It stands to reason that the same can be said for all the jobs created by the influx of visitors to the Western Cape.

Further to this, I would like to add the following. For the hon Minister and hon Premier to consider: you cannot build a province on casual and outsourcing labour and whilst it may be true that the Western Cape has lowered its unemployment rate, it has lowered its wage, too. It is misleading as this is all done through EPWP which is a poverty alleviation tool and not an employment programme. This province which has the highest housing rentals in the country, is also the province where the most people employed on stipends and earning incomes of under R500 per week. This makes it the most oppressive employing province in the country, and this is not an achievement to be proud of. All you have done is glorify entrenched slavery. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Little. I now recognise the hon Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Province is in a race to keep up with a rapidly changing world, but it continues in failing to address the historical unequal

economic opportunities. The Western Cape is one of several cities? in the world that are characterised by high inequality and ignores the plight of thousands of informal traders who are struggling to survive. They are prohibited by the City of Cape Town to earn a living because of the red tape on applications for permits to trade. Al Jama-Ah calls for the removal of permits and that informal traders must rather register to trade. Thousands of families are affected when the red tape on permits determine their right to earn a living.

The National Government has various policies in place to restructure the economy to bring about equitable economic opportunities. Spatial development is along racial and class lines, and your ordinary informal traders are prevented from trading in areas they wish to. Al Jama-Ah calls on the Province to stop its agricultural partnership and other trade with the Zionist Israeli regime. It is thus not surprising that thousands of farmworkers are being evicted from agricultural land and the land they have a right to. We call for equal economic opportunities without involving Zionist businesses. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Brinkhuis. I now recognise the hon Murray.

Ms C MURRAY: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. As these days of debate draw to a close, I recall the words of Helen Suzman who famously said:

“I stand for simple justice, equal opportunity and human rights. The indispensable elements in a democratic society and well worth fighting for.”

It is on these pillars that we can erect a framework for the Western Cape’s future. Here, where the Cape pours its mountains into the sea, we have nurtured a province that stands resilient. A leaning beacon amidst the shadow of uncertainty faced in the rest of the country. Our Province, steered by the DA’s capable hands, has become a sanctuary of prosperity where policy is not just written, but enacted. Where resources are not merely allocated, but effectively used.

DEDAT’s investment in skills development is not just a budgetary allocation, but also a transformative force. They have channelled R86-million into projects that will see 2 900 individuals embrace new employment opportunities this year. This stands in poignant contrast to the fumbled efforts in ANC provinces where unemployment reigns sky high, despite having higher funding which is further exacerbated by bureaucratic inertia and a lack of clear strategy. This Province is bolstering the backbone of our economy in South Africa, extending business development services to 200 businesses. This method is one of proactive support, a stark departure from the bureaucratic mazes and fiscal mismanagement that stifles growth in ANC-led administrations.

Examples abound from the faltering small business support in provinces like

Gauteng, where red tape hampers entrepreneurial spirit to the misallocated funds in Limpopo that could have spurred growth, but instead resulted in stalled projects and dashed hopes. This Department has done extensive work in laying the groundwork including regulatory requirements and policy directions that will enable municipalities to procure and produce their electricity and free residents from Eskom's continued implosion.

In fact, this is complimented by the DA-run City of Cape Town which is leading the way in this regard. Some highlights of their efforts include securing embedded independent power procurement, renewable energy of 200 megawatts, a dispatchable IPP programme of up to 500 megawatts, wheeling of up to 350 megawatts and private small scale embedded generation of up to 100 megawatts. These collective efforts are critical because we cannot increase jobs, grow the economy or continue to see a rise in tourism if we cannot even turn on the lights.

The DA's vision for a green economy has taken tangible form in a significant budget increase for sector development, contrasting sharply with the inertia in ANC controlled regions. The Atlantis Special Economic Zone and Freeport Saldanha stands as hallmarks in this commitment and are unfortunately contrasted by the National Government's apathy towards IDZs and SEZs which has seen tax reprieve not be granted and trying to bring these projects to a halt.

As hon Minister Wenger has highlighted, in the realm of tourism, the Western

Cape under DA leadership, has risen like a phoenix. As of January 2024, international arrivals moving through Cape Town International Airport have surpassed pre-pandemic levels by over 16%, a far cry from the decline in visitor numbers in provinces like the Eastern Cape where mismanagement and a lack of foresight have seen potential tourist hotspots wither in obscurity.

Mobile data insights from Wesgro paint a picture of a province that beckons international tourists to return time and time again. With 48% of visitors to Cape Town coming back again. These discerning globetrotters linger longer at our attractions, investing their time and resources into our economy. Our rich tapestry of attractions has drawn both domestic and international eyes to places like the Garden Route and Klein Karoo, where over 60% of tourists opt for overnight stays. A success story yet to be replicated in other regions ruled by the ANC because of their lack of strategic focus and commitment to showcasing natural heritage.

I want to convey my deepest gratitude yet again, to DEDAT as well as to the hon Minister and HOD for their leadership. Your unwavering commitment underpins the prosperity and wellbeing of our province. Again, I would like to thank my Committee members for their oversight, which has been the very foundation that has allowed us to ensure and to protect those that we serve.

I would also like to thank my fiancé, Andy. Thank you for standing by my side, for listening to my frustrations, for motivating me to charge ahead. You are and always have been the rock that keeps me anchored to the ground.

And I look forward to us contributing to this province's economic growth when we celebrate our own wedding.

To my colleagues and the people of the Western Cape, I know that my support for this budget is rooted in a belief in its transformative power and in our collective ability to harness it for the betterment of all. In the legacy of Suzman's ideals, we march forward. This budget is not just a financial plan, but a declaration of our values, a testament to the Western Cape Government's commitment to justice, equality and opportunity for all. Let us pledge to embody these values, to become the torch bearers of a new era defined by wisdom, by transparency and relentless progress for all our citizens.

To each of you who contribute to this journey from public servants to private citizens, your role is invaluable. Your aspirations are the wind of our sails guiding us towards a province that not only meets expectations, but exceeds them, setting as standard for the nation to aspire to. It is not merely the beauty of our land or the richness of our culture that makes the Western Cape exceptional, it is the quality of our governance. The Democratic Alliance has set a high bar when it comes to administration, proving that with the right leadership, good governance is not only possible, but is flourishing. This is why come 29 May ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms C MURRAY: ...I call on residents, I call on citizens, to make that pivotal decision to vote out the ANC once and for all. By voting for the DA, you are voting for progress, you are voting for job creation, and you are voting for good governance across South Africa. Together, let us embrace the DA's vision ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

Ms C MURRAY: ...work and development. Let us make the collective choice for a government that will continue to improve governance and create much needed jobs throughout our beautiful country. Hon Deputy Speaker, the DA supports this Vote.

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

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. I have a lot to respond to. The debate has been quite far and wide. I am going to attempt to respond to as many as I can. Well, and thanks to the hon members that participated in the debate.

Hon Nkondlo who raised the issue about a terrible incident that occurred in Gordons Bay. It is true that she raised it with me ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and I have responded in this House to her concerns in writing. Our Tourism Team does not have any investigative powers. Meanwhile, the incident has been reported to the correct authorities and is currently in the courts.

On the Pick 'n Pay Market Store Project which started in 2018, DEDAT provided grant funding to recipients for the refurbishment of minimarket stores in townships. And participants over the course of the project received R4,1-million in funding and 185 people, of which 168 were new jobs that were created through this project who were mainly women. So, it is unfair to say that the Department had left people in debt when the Department only provided grant funding. Unfortunately, there was a business that was in breach of their agreement and the Department is attempting to claim back some of these funds for being in breach of those. And I believe that is what the SCOPA meeting was attempting to unpack.

I do find it peculiar that the ANC has highlighted the Companies Act and in particular, the gender pay gap because hot off the press in the National Assembly and to quote my colleague in the National Assembly who sat on the Committee, hon Dean Macpherson, he noted that some stakeholders proposed including the gender pay gap ratio that should be included in the Committee's report. Within the Committee there was consensus on the importance of addressing the gender pay gap disparities. However, there was a difference of opinion in whether it should be included in the current Amendment Bill.

In this regard, the ANC was of the view that the inclusion would require in-depth consideration and public participation on how to incorporate this effectively into Legislation and stressed that the implication of the process including this provision, would delay the processing of this Bill beyond the current Term of Parliament. Thus, delaying relief offered by other provisions in the Bill. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Therefore, they propose that this be considered in the next Parliament and further legislation be brought in this regard.

Other parties were of the view that they should have been included, despite possible delays in processing the Bill. So, in other words, during the recent legislative process, the ANC was not interested in including the gender pay gap ratio in the amendments to the Companies Act. [Interjections.]

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

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Then, on the township and informal economies ..,[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...across the G4J ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...strategy, we have 17 interventions across four priority focus areas relating to investment, technology, infrastructure and improved access. I would be very happy to provide the details on the 17 projects.

On Tourism, hon Little, thank you for your inputs. I mean, I agree that Tourism is a combined effort. It is Government, it is industry and in fact, every single resident that gives visitors a warm Western Cape welcome. I must acknowledge that Minister de Lille does, in fact, call regular MINMEC meetings, unlike her predecessors, but unfortunately, the combined effort of Tourism is often thwarted by actors outside of the tourism industry.

For example, the Department of Home Affairs which is responsible for the absolute visa and ‘swallow’s’ fiasco that is currently playing out in which tourists are being declared undesirable because the Minister’s speech does not count as a firm directive to the Boarder Management Agency and the Department is unable to provide a clear directive that would articulate exactly what the Minister said in his speech. And so, we do need Minister De Lille to ask her colleagues, particularly Minister Motsoaledi and Minister

Cele, to address those things that hamper tourism the most. These are issues and safety issues.

My thanks go to the hon members of the Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Development and Tourism for their oversight of our work. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to the Chairperson, hon Cayla Murray, for her enthusiastic engagement on issues, her willingness to support provincial projects and your clear passion for the economy in pursuit of a better life for residents of the province.

I would like to thank outgoing HOD, Mr Velile Dube, who will be leaving us in a few months' time, unfortunately. It has been an honour to work with you, sir, and your patient and careful consideration of strategic matters has been of such benefit to this Department. You have enriched the organisation in relationships and leave it better off. And with a brand-new economic action plan to deliver breakout economic growth that sets a clear path to enable the creation of many more jobs across the province. Your service will leave the Western Cape better off as well. Thank you for your service to this Government, to the people of this province and to South Africa.

I also would like to express my deep appreciation to the entire DEDAT team. The custodians of the Growth for Jobs strategy, for your deep and abiding commitment to the Western Cape economy and to growing jobs in our economy. Thank you very much for all of your hard work.

My gratitude cannot be more loudly stated to my fellow Cabinet colleagues who have contributed to and embraced the G4J strategy which finds expression in almost every Provincial Government department. It truly is a Whole of Government strategy designed to keep building a Western Cape that works for all.

And finally, I must acknowledge the very hard work, diligence and commitment of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Opportunities, powered almost entirely by women: Lauren Kent, Rushka Brenner, Suzanne Smit, Georgie Maree, Gaynor Lucas, Sandra Francisco and well as Andro Saur and Igshaan Jacobs. Thank you to the excellent work that you do every day. What a truly excellent team. Thank you.

It is therefore my pleasure to table Vote 12 Economic Development and Tourism. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister Wenger. That concludes this Vote. I am just going to allow for the officials to leave before we proceed to the next Vote.

[Business of the House paused for clearing of bays.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready, Minister? Okay, thank you very much. I see Minister Allen is very eager, but before he begins can I just ask that Mr Stemele, you read the next order of the day?

The CHIEF PARLIAMENTARY OFFICER: Debate on Vote 4: Police Oversight and Community Safety – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B1–2024]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Stemele. I now recognise the hon, Minister Allen.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: Thank you so much, Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, hon members and honoured guests. Today I would firstly like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to the Premier Alan Winde who 701 days ago afforded me the opportunity to serve in this particular role. As I have stated often I am counting because I know we do not have time, so to the Premier, through you, Deputy Speaker, thank you to Cabinet colleagues, thank you to the entire DA caucus. Thank you, but also to each and every member of this House. You have helped shape me; you have helped in terms of broadening not only my knowledge and my expertise, but you have also made sure that I am actually needing to do what I am doing at the moment so thank you.

It was also, member Harris, on this day 701 days ago. It was the hon Dugmore that was shouting: "Make Reagan the MEC, make Reagan the MEC," and when solid proposals, Deputy Speaker, when credible solutions are presented in this particular House this Government listens and we take those on board. Deputy Speaker, I have done a quick analysis, a quick

analysis in terms of the spoken word from yesterday up until today, speech specialists will tell us that the average person speaks between 120 and 150 words per minute. If we calculate the amount of minutes excluding the Executive it amounts to 739 minutes. For each and every Budget Vote, 14 Budget Votes calculated across each and every Vote, if I am conservative, Deputy Speaker, we are looking at 45 minutes per Executive member over 14 Budget Votes that will take us to 630 minutes. That is too much to absorb because the father of the House will be delighted to be informed that it equates roughly over these two days, over 210 000 words were spoken in this budget debate, over 210 000 words. This is the point. The point is the members in this House, when we speak it is backed up by action because words are powerful and words can shape and words can ultimately take our country and our province forward but more importantly it is built on action because we have consistently shown as the Minister, when in tabling this budget, it was a budget ultimately to keep the Western Cape to work, to ensure that we can play our role in the Western Cape on this rescue mission that we are endeavouring on here in South Africa. So the words, 210 000 words over two days, DA members have backed that up by action, by implementing programmes and plans that have ultimately helped and shaped many people in our province.

So, Speaker, I have to acknowledge that over the years this DA-led Government consistently showed its bravery. In fact five years ago we initiated the Western Cape Safety Plan and we are still the only Province that have implemented a Safety Plan. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: This particular Safety Plan was then adopted almost 90% in terms of the National Crime and Integrated Violence Prevention Strategy from National Government in 2020. To member Harris, I think that will be good reading to actually look at the timelines on when we tabled that plan, but, Deputy Speaker, this has been a critical initiative of the Western Cape Government particularly since our LEAP officers are deployed in areas where the murder rates are the highest, effectively meaning our LEAP officers are placed where the need is the highest because we have seen consistent under-resourcing in areas like Khayelitsha, Samora Machel, Philippi, including Hanover Park, Mitchells Plain, Delft, Kraaifontein and many more. I mention these names, Deputy Speaker, because these are areas that we find there is a huge gap in the SAPS deployment, a huge gap in the SAPS deployment and why is this particular gap, because the National Government has consistently failed to implement our Policing Needs and Priorities. Our Policing Needs and Priorities is a constitutional, it is a legislative requirement that each and every Province must table yearly and we do it consulting widely with various stakeholders including municipalities, including our CPFs, including Neighbourhood Watches. It is so widely consulted and we have broad consensus.

However, when we table our Policing Needs and Priorities to the National

Government it is hardly taken into account, but these are needs and priorities when we look at what needs to be done, we have always been clear in that we are needing to help and assist the South African Police Service. We are not wanting a free pass in this particular province hence we have placed additional boots on the ground to compensate for the lack of resources that we have seen in that space. So, Speaker, as the Western Cape Government we care, we care about our citizens and our residents. We care about members in this particular House because our aim in terms of the Safety Plan is to ensure that residents live in safer communities, but, Deputy Speaker, it is because of this bravery a report by the Institute of Security Studies – not even our own internal report, not even a report from the Department of the Premier, but an independent report, a credible organisation, stated and showed that between 2019 and the end of 2023 this was the only province and what is that province? It is the Western Cape, the only province that saw a reduction in terms of the murder rate... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members?

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: ...over a period of 2019 to 2023. This was also pegged against murder rates in the Eastern Cape, in Gauteng and in KwaZulu-Natal which also increase where two of those provinces saw double-digit increases in their murder rate. Here we saw a decrease per capita and that is something that we can build upon and that is something that this Government will commit to that come a day after 29 May that we will continue as a DA-led Government in the

Western Cape to continue to build on our successes.

In fact, Deputy Speaker, for as long as the ANC and its alliance partners are anywhere near a seat of Government we sadly see the people suffer. It would be remiss of me not to mention that on record we can confirm that 25,7% of crime in our province occurred during loadshedding, that occurs in a time when loadshedding should have been eradicated months ago if the President was true to his word, where he said loadshedding will end in 2014; then it was said in 2016, but yet the new member from this House, member Poole, the inner area of Paarl, can confirm that little Mia Botha was taken during loadshedding – during loadshedding, so we have seen where loadshedding impacts on crime. I can take members... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: One minute, hon Minister. One minute, hon Minister. Please take your seat. Hon Sayed, what is your point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hon Deputy Speaker, is my good friend, the hon Allen willing to take a question about the former Drakenstein Mayor?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please answer whether you are willing to take a question?

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: Not at this moment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: I will appreciate member Sayed, I would want to not waste... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order members! Order members!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: I would not want to add too many words on top of the 210 000 so I would want to, from now on, be as brief as possible. So, Deputy Speaker, on the one hand we have seen crime is deeply complex. We have seen things of National Government and like I have indicated loadshedding does contribute to an increase in crime 25,7% confirmed by the South African Police Service. Little Mia Botha was taken during loadshedding. I was in Khayelitsha on the Sunday, during loadshedding on the Saturday there was a mass murder so we have seen that, but also I can confirm that when there is a release of parolees into our communities we can actually confirm today that 50% of parolees that were released between April and December last year was released into our priority areas where LEAP officers are working, because we have already identified the need. Over 50% of all the parolees back into those communities, and we have seen 113 of them re-offend for crimes like assault, burglaries theft, protection orders being violated. So a woman ultimately feeling unsafe and then a perpetrator violating that protection order placing that woman in further stress and in further pain and anxiety. We have seen

when the Department of Correctional Service fail in their particular mandate to rehabilitate offenders. We are seeing increases in crime in our province, but regardless of that I want to again state we are the only province – the only province that saw a reduction in the murder rate per capita as opposed to other provinces that saw increases.

Deputy Speaker, so our journey will continue a day after 29 May to build on the successes that we have already achieved under this particular term, led by Premier Winde, and this budget demonstrates that it is brave and directly linked to action and delivery, especially since we will not get that from our National Government. So, Deputy Speaker, R763,34 million has been appropriated for the 2024/25 financial year. This is an increase of R49,34 million or 6.9% in terms of the Adjustment Budget.

I would also want to quantify that, when we did an analysis on the SAPS budget we actually saw the SAPS budget for this particular year over the MTEF is increasing by 5,13%. Our budget here is increasing by 6,91% so we are always one step ahead of what National Government is doing and we are wanting National Government to actually catch up with what we are doing in this regard and after 29 May under a DA-led Government the National Government will definitely be able to step up further, so if we consider the R350 million there has been allocated to LEAP and this initiative, Deputy Speaker, it is extremely important if we are wanting to reduce the murder rate by 50%, by 2029.

If you inquired from the National Government how or what the plan is to combat crime or murder in the Western Cape or how they are going to capacitate SAPS they would not be able to answer adequately in that regard, because we have showed here since the inception of our LEAP Programme, we have ensured that 564 illegal firearms are removed from our streets. It would be again remiss of me not to indicate a study that confirmed that one illegal firearm can potentially contribute to 12 murders but also the successes in terms of the arrest that we have seen, 28 000 arrests have been made since the inception and we are trying very hard, Deputy Speaker, to ensure that National departments like the NPA and Correctional Services can ultimately do their job.

When we look at the prosecutorial work that the NPA is needing to do it lags behind the amount of arrests that we are ultimately making because we are wanting to ensure that criminals are ultimately behind bars, but further to this we have set aside R25 million for our LEAP Stations and members of this House will recall that during the Adjustment Budget R5 million was set aside for the establishment of our LEAP Centres. I can confirm today that we currently have three up and running. They are located in Delft, in Mfuleni and in Philippi. I have already visited those particular centres and the feedback that I have gotten from members in that particular community where they see an extra visible presence of not only deployed officers on our streets and in our roads but also in that particular centre, so LEAP officers now have an additional base to be deployed from and this will ultimately cut down the time of being deployed from a particular police station while residents also

have the space where they will now be able to engage our LEAP officers and other stakeholders to ensure that we work closely together with communities, because we want to ensure that we can continue to foster trust within law enforcement and indirectly in the South African Police Service as a result of our oversight role.

Deputy Speaker, our focus is provincial safety. We currently have three of our K9 Units based in Swartland, in Mossel Bay and in the Overstrand municipal areas and I again, Deputy Speaker, want to highlight that when the Premier occupied this particular post the Premier highlighted that there was a 38% reduction over a five-year period in terms of SAPS' K9 Units, so we have had to step in. We have had to step up because we have seen these reductions in the South African Police Service so that 38% reduction, it is actually the Western Cape that have stepped up by making sure that we have K9 Units in Swartland, Mossel Bay and in the Overstrand areas and I want to confirm again that they work across municipal boundaries, so for Swartland it will be all the way up to Matzikama considering that there is a need across that entire district of the West Coast but also for the Overberg and the entire Garden Route area. So our focus will remain to ensure that we can capacitate those K9 Units and see the continued successes that they are reaching. These units are extremely active in working with the South African Police Service, and when I visit a District Commander that particular Commissioner will indicate that they would not have been able to reach certain successes without the help of the extra boots and the extra dogs that we have placed in those particular areas. The Overstrand K9 Unit regularly assist with the

discovery of illegally poached abalone and other illicit items that are making sure inroads along the coastal areas, protecting both man and marine life, so too the Swartland Unit and most recently our Mossel Bay Unit. I can confirm that this budget has provided an R11,3 million for the further support of these units.

Last year, Deputy Speaker, I also mentioned our Rural Safety Units that are active in terms of the Swartland area, Overstrand, and it is due to come on board. I am pleased to state that both the units are fully operational and just as the canine units are working closely with the South African Police Service, because our Rural Safety Unit and the R9,9 million that we allocate to that is to ensure that the resourcing and the continued support will be there for those particular units. Extra visibility, the South African Police Service itself will indicate that visibility is a key deterrent in order to curb crime so we are creating that extra visibility in the areas.

It will also be remiss of me not to highlight the following: when we look at a particular South African Police Service Station the UN pegs the ratio to be acceptable, to be one officer for every 250 residents. We can clearly see where we have those ratios in place we actually see crime reduced, hence we are always advocating for resources to be placed where the need is the greatest, so continuing with our safety footprint throughout the province, just last week I had the privilege of visiting and handing over our graduation certificates to 20 of our peace officers in the Cape Agulhas Municipal Area and this is also one of the brainchildren of the Premier, where we wanted to

ensure that there are peace officers where we can look at providing young people with a job opportunity but also helping towards safety. Cape Agulhas has become known for all the wrong reasons, for reasons where the name of Anene Booysen is reverberating through our country; the name of Sulnita Manho is reverberating. We know what happened to them in the Bredasdorp area. We have consistently echoed that we want to step in and make sure that there is extra visibility so that no other name needs to reverberate for the wrong reasons.

We can confirm also that we have already placed since July 2022, I do not now if it is only due to me being here after that, seeing that the Premier is in the House to listen, so we have placed over 206 of our peace officers across 12 municipalities helping and assisting and that includes municipalities that is even governed not by the DA, because we are data-led, we are evidence-based, so we have not been strategic to appoint peace officers where there are DA Governments only. We have been clear that we want to be data-led and evidence-based and I even made sure that that data showed that Theewaterskloof should get a peace officer allocation, and when we went there we were disturbed to find out that politicians wanted to appoint peace officers and we quickly stepped in to ensure that we can have a credible process where the diagnostic testing can be done, the psychometric testing can be done, the fitness can be done, so that we only employ the persons that are best placed to help the Theewaterskloof, so we are always data-led, and these peace officers, the 206 that we have appointed, over 98%, Deputy Speaker, were unemployed when they entered that particular programme. As

we remain in our rural parts of the province and our support to our districts, we have placed R4,5 million in that regard because our focus still remains to ensure that we can capacitate our rural safety districts and make sure that we work jointly with all of them.

Partnerships is also a key aspect to what we are doing at this stage of working with CPFs, working with our Neighbourhood Watches. We currently have 450 of our Neighbourhood Watches and Farm Watches that we support. We accredit, we train, but we also make sure that we work closely with our CPFs to ensure that the CPF can fulfil their mandate essentially. We have allocated R4,7 million in that regard. Without these brave and dedicated volunteers, Deputy Speaker, we would not have been able to achieve what we have achieved in this particular term so I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all our safety partners.

On Police Oversight, and this is one that the Premier highlighted in his SOPA of 2022, he highlighted there is going to be a name change to this particular Department because we are needing to ramp up our oversight; that I am needing to showcase, together with the Department, that our oversight can lead to better service delivery. In that regard we have consistently showed that where we have oversight it must lead to better service delivery and our programmes working in that space will continue. Also the work we do in terms of the Western Cape Police Ombudsman, which is an independent entity, is another layer we use to ensure that once there is any inefficiency in the South African Police Service or when there is any poor investigations taking place the Ombudsman's Office can step in. I can confirm for the last

quarter and I released information on it just yesterday, that over 86% of all cases between September and December last year were actually already concluded by the Ombudsman's Office.

We also continue with our Court Watching Briefs to ensure that we can continue to monitor court cases and where there is inefficiencies we will ensure that justice is not merely delayed and denied, but that justice is actually brought to the many victims or survivors that we have in our province. So as far as our policing strategy is concerned we will continue to support the mandatory and collaborative deliverables of our oversight mandate that must ultimately lead to better service delivery. We cannot have SAPS members failing our residents, it is already enough that they are needing to contend with crime on a daily basis. We also cannot afford our men and women in blue, who do not deserve to wear the uniform or carry the badge, to have an adverse impact on our residents.

On Chrysalis, we will continue to support Chrysalis, Deputy Speaker. We have allocated R23,6 million in that regard. We work with a number of other departments in the Western Cape Government, together with the Department of Social Development, together with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports, all playing a role to ensure that we can keep young men and women from poverty-stricken communities, from gang-ridden communities an opportunity to form part of that particular opportunity.

On 6 April we are seeing another graduation of the Class of Chrysalis and

since inception we have already seen over 10 000 Chrysalis graduates. We also placed them on a work opportunity for a year and I can confirm and I am delighted to give an accolade to the South African Police Service in this regard, because we have now seen a number of our Chrysalis graduates, once we place them on a year where this Government pays them for a year in a SAPS Station, we ultimately see them being taken up into the South African Police Service and I have witnessed many of them at our parades and they are absorbed into the South African Police Service.

It will also be remiss of me not to share the story of a gentleman that applied to the Chrysalis Academy and, Deputy Speaker, I would not want to relate too much information into the public domain on this particular matter, but it will paint a picture. It is a person that could easily have made a decision to join a gang. This is the son of a person that led a gang for many, many years. His father was brutally killed and he could have made a choice to join a gang to avenge the death of his dad. However, he made it equipment to join and to apply to the Chrysalis Programme and we have seen how he is now placed within a certain municipality and the reports I am getting is that he is an active leader, a young person with leadership capabilities contributing effectively to community safety where he could have easily been the leader of a gang, should he have opted in that regard.

We will also continue to work with the Western Cape Liquor Authority. We will not calm, no, because when we look at safety some of these matters needs to filter through because I have only heard once, "Where is the Safety

Plan" during the past two days, and I see that as a highlight, because we have always heard: "Where is the Safety Plan," and then we provide the Safety Plan, so I am glad that people have read and if people are shouting that I must end now, it does bode that, yes, I have worked outside and I will continue with my work but let me conclude.

I would like to thank the HOD, I would like to thank the HOD...
[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:
...because I have entered politics not to make friends. I have entered politics not to make friends. I have come here to serve. I have come to make a commitment to see how we can ultimately help our residents, so, thank you, Deputy Speaker.

In conclusion I want to say to the officials that are sitting in the bench...
[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:
Please accept my sincere gratitude. In the HOD's absence, thank you to the HOD for your leadership and for all that you have done to the entire

management of the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety together with our entities in the Western Cape Liquor Authority, our partners in Chrysalis. Thank you. To each and every member of this particular House, thank you so much. You have stretched me. You have helped me. You have guided me. There are members of this House like member Ferlon Christians that have consistently given credible input; members like member Kama that is no longer here, I want to say thank you.

I want to express a special thank you to my wife who has seen first-hand how we have had to work and step in and step up and she had faced many challenges considering that I am needing to be in a certain location, in a certain area at a certain time, so I want to say thank you to my wife and to the team in the Ministry that I have asked to sit in the bench to your left. They have declined. I have made that particular request, knowing that they have become the persons that I can rely on so to each and every person in the ministry, to Stacy McLean, to Marcellino Martin, to Onge, to Juliet Stone, to Nicole Easton, to Kaliba. Thank you, thank you so much, because the Premier gave me a mandate and he said to me 701 days ago: "Reagan, Safety is now on your broad shoulders" and, member Harris, I looked at my shoulders, and it became very evident that I would need to stand next to the Premier; I would need to stand next to Education; next to other Departments. I would need to stand next to other members and other stakeholders so that our shoulders can be broad and so that we can actually today boast about the fact that we have seen successes in this term; boast about the fact that this is the province where we are seeing decreases. We can boast about it, but we will

never be arrogant in saying that we do not have a long way to go. We know we have a long way to go and come 29 May, after 29 May we will be ready to continue the rescue mission that we have already undertaken because it is a Western Cape that is ultimately already rescuing South Africa if we listen to each and every word of the 210 000 words that have been echoed over these last two days and I know I have added an additional 1084 words, but I sincerely trust that you will not – †dat julle my nie kwalik neem nie, maar dit was goed wat moet gesê gewees het. Dankie. [that you do not blame me, but it was things that should have been said. Thank you.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Minister Allen. I now recognise the hon Bans. I will just ask one of the staff members to assist. Thank you. Thank you, Minister Allen. [Pause.]

In the spirit of collegiality, hon Bans, are you ready? You may proceed.

Ms A BANS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms A BANS: I do not know why the Premier gets excited when I am speaking here. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may proceed, hon Bans.

Ms A BANS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms A BANS: Deputy Speaker, esteemed members of the House and distinguished guests. Thank you, MEC, for bringing the podium to myself, practicing the new leadership that is coming in, after 29 May. I must say, Deputy Speaker, each time when we are in this House there is a serious comparison when it comes to crime to other provinces where the DA-led Government will always bring up issues of other provinces and now the MEC even making a statement saying that National Government must catch up.

The reality is that the Western Cape is a gangster's paradise, and it must sink in with us. We will never get solutions if we always compare and not take what is in front of us and find a solution in what is happening with the realities in front of us.

Deputy Speaker, we stand at a critical juncture where our duty as members of this House demands that we scrutinize every decision made by the Executive, particularly those pertaining the safety and well-being of our people and communities. I implore each and every one of us to rise above partisan divides and reject the proposed budget for the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety – reject!

†Veiligheid beïnvloed ons almal en maak nie onderskeid van party-affiliasie

of velkleur nie. Ons kan 'n goeie gewete en 'n begroting ondersteun wat versuim om die dieper oorsake van misdaad aan te spreek en die gewelddadige en onsekere sirkel voed wat ons provinsie teister.

Laat my 'n boodskap van waardering oordra aan die Provinsiale Kommissaris, Kommissaris Patekile vir die goeie werk wat hy en sy bestuur by die SAPD doen om die provinsie 'n beter plek te maak. Ons het gesien hoe verskeie bendeleiers vir verskeie ernstige sake insluitende bendewese en afpersing gearresteer is. Dit is lofwaardig deur die SAPD. Ons bedank ook die Kommissaris vir die getoonde belangstelling in landelike veiligheid soos blyk uit die onlangste arrestasies van verdagtes van dwelmsmokkelary, in besonder in die Karoo in.

[Safety affects all of us and does not distinguish between party affiliation or skin colour. We can support a good conscience and a budget that leglects to address the deeper causes of crime and feed the violent and uncertain circle plaguing our province.

Let me convey a message of appreciation to the Provincial Commissioner, Commissioner Patekile for the good work that he and his management at the SAPS to make the province a better place. We have seen how various gang leaders have been arrested for vearious serious cases including gangsterism and extortion. It is commendable by the SAPS. We also thank the Commissioner for showing interest in rural safety as seen in the recent arrests of suspects of drug trafficking, particularly in the Karoo.]

Deputy Speaker, I want to also take the opportunity to thank the staff of the

ANC on the fourth floor. They are a very small portion, but they make it all the time possible for us to come here and be ready and be glaring and be on point. I want to start with my own secretary, Portia, for always being there and supporting all of us and it does not exclude Portia. All of the secretaries, Auntie Audrey, Auntie Veronica, Bonnie, they make sure that we are on point. I want to thank them and I know they are watching us. For our researchers also, that is a small portion of them, I want to say thank you to Lisa Nangomso Phamela

†Ngomsebenzi owenzayo ungadinwa mfowethu siyaqonda ba nasebusuku siyaphona sithi asixolanga kufuneka uphinde, awudinwa ke wena Phamela wenza okoko. Enkosi ngomonde onawo uMbali, uYamkela, uSinaye [With the work that you are doing without getting tired brother we understand that even at night we call and say we are not at peace you must do more, you never get tired you continue to serve us. Thank you for your patience uMbali, uYamkela, uSinaye]

Including our own Dr Seale, Nokuthula for always being there with our cup of coffee, even when we work at night. We appreciate that a lot and all of the staff and especially the cleaners.

When MEC Wenger tabled the 2024 Budget she claimed it was a pathway to economic growth and promotion of safety and well-being for the residents of the Western Cape; yet closer examination reveals glaring inequalities. She said this budget allocates R5 billion for Safety over the 2024 MTEF with

R1,091 billion allocated for enhancing law enforcement operations in municipalities through the Law Enforcement Advancement Plan, LEAP Programme. While welcoming these allocations we do not agree with the set of plans that will be funded.

During yesterday's debate member Bosman claimed that the DA-led Provincial Government was the only one in the country with workable ideas to combat crime. These assertions by the dishonourable member are baseless when confronted with factual data. These assertions are no different to the blue lies he made last year claiming DCAS spent millions on programmes targeted at youth out of crime and gangs, when he knew that was not the case. The overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure document exposes the truth that between 2019 and 2023 significant crime categories in the Western Cape increased with murder at 4,5% and sexual offences at 3,5. Alarmingly in 2023 the Nyanga Cluster accounted for 21,2% of murders, followed by Blue Downs with 16,8% and Khayelitsha with 14,8%, all despite the presence of the LEAP officers.

Deputy Speaker, this shows that ever since Premier Winde came to office and spent over a billion on that Safety Plan, murder continued to rise. I am sure member Bosman will be thrilled to know that under our ANC Government we achieved a remarkable 23,9% decrease in the murder rate, between April 2008 and March 2009 bringing it down to 44,6 per 100 000. However, the DA's governance has seen the rate soars to 57 per 100 000, today. I know they will get excited. When we see such statistics we must start asking difficult

questions like really is there value for money, Premier, in the investment we make in the Safety Plan? This billion, is it worth it? We pump in millions every year but the results are not showing and that is a fact. Why are we still having serious crime and you are putting so much money? The undeniable truth is the Democratic Alliance has failed dismally in its duty to combat crime. Their approach has been short-sighted, focusing solely on deploying more boots on the ground without addressing the underlying social factors driving the crime.

During our time we had the Bambanani against Crime Programme and we gave meaningful support and resources to Community Policing Forums and the results of this intervention speaks volumes for themselves. The underlying factors – Premier must listen, I will tell him shortly.

The ANC still strongly believes communities play a pivotal role in combating crime as shown in its 2024 Elections where it highlights the critical role of communities in preventing crime and gender-based violence through adequate resourcing of Community Policing Forums. In contrast the DA in this budget is reducing its spending on Community Police Relations Subprogramme by over 7%. This is a programme aimed at promoting good relations between the police and community by facilitating the capacitation of function of safety partners. This exposes that the DA undermines efforts to foster positive police community relations, thereby perpetuating a cycle of distrust. The disparities in the funding allocations between Neighbourhood Watches and the CPFs, they still persist, Deputy Speaker.

This budget allocates 10 000 per year, 10 000 per year to allocated Neighbourhood Watches for their projects, while the CPFs are undermined and under-funded. The ANC is strongly opposed to this and calls on the MEC to end this deliberate weakening, undermining and destabilisation of CPFs.

Deputy Speaker, crime is not just a security issue. It is a complex social phenomenon rooted in poverty, inequality and unemployment despite this acknowledgment in the Department's annual performance plan the DA Government has turned a blind eye to the systemic issues. Crime to flourish unchecked in our most vulnerable communities. The failure to address the spatial environment exacerbates the challenges of policing in these areas. This is proved by the spatial distribution of murders in the Western Cape which shows that 10 Police precincts out of 151 account for nearly 50% of all murders and nearly 40% of attempted murders. These are all in the poor working class communities, take note, in the Cape Flats, Premier. Ravaged by high unemployment rates, poverty, drugs and substance abuse and various other anomalies, poor accessibility and inadequate lightning and a lack of basic infrastructure creates a conducive environment for criminal activities to occur. All these fall under the purview of Provincial and Local Government spheres.

This is one of many examples of how the DA is failing to guarantee the safety of our people.

The proposed budget fails to address these pressing socio-economic challenges, neglecting the spatial environment's critical role in crime prevention.

Deputy Speaker, the Department has stated, it seeks to align the budget with the Western Cape Government Policy Priorities, mainly the Growth for Jobs, Wellbeing and Safety. This commitment did not stop this Department from dismissing over 100 LEAP officers under the guise of incompetence. It is not the first time that this Department kicks a Black child to the streets. Who will still remember the abrupt termination of contracts by the Department for the 1000 Safety Ambassadors for no reason and the abrupt ending of the Walking Bus Project? The arbitrary dismissal of the LEAP officers who are predominantly Black African and female is a gross injustice and that undermines both the law enforcement professional and taxpayers' investment in their training. The ANC condemns in the strongest possible terms the unjust dismissal and demands their immediate reinstatement and adequate support to fulfil their duties effectively. This dismissal is also the spotlight on the LEAP Programme expenditure on training. The seventh Administration, while we have to look at the possibility of corruption in this, the LEAP Programme aimed to train and deploy only 1 200 officers, yet every year we have new recruits who undergo training. I would not be surprised, Deputy Speaker, if the programme has already trained over 10 000 recruits since it is inception.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we note with grave concern that despite escalating

violent crimes in the province, the Department has taken a decision to decrease the number of hotspot areas where LEAP officers are deployed. This is really baffling. For the longest time we knew LEAP officers to be deployed in 13 hotspot areas, but this year's budget documents revealed that they operate in 11 hotspot areas. Why? We call on the MEC to provide a reasonable explanation for this.

Equally confusing and concerning is the decision to cut the budget for the Police Provincial Secretariat by 2,41% – deeply concerning. By slashing its funding the Provincial Government is undermining its own ability to effectively combat crime and uphold the rule of law. Moreover while the Provincial Government on its Overview Provincial Revenue and Expenditure vows to continue with municipalities, bolster their law enforcement capacity, in this budget the opposite is happening as the transfer to District Municipalities have been slashed by a whopping 32,43%. There is no justification for these cuts, especially given that the Department's budget increased by 6,91 from R714 million in 2023/24 Revised Estimates to R663 million in 2024/25 with a 15,08 increase in Equitable Share funding.

Deputy Speaker, in this budget we also see 11,90% in reduction in the budget allocation for the office of the HOD. We do not know if it is related to the HOD taking up a Chief Director position. The MEC must explain reasons for this move. Is it a demotion or another form of cadre deployment to create a safe landing for when the term ends? Was there really no suitable qualified person in the entire province for this job, for the past years, that it could not

be filled by anyone and just a redeployment from one position to another position without a process? Can we be clarified in this House about that?

Deputy Speaker, over the 2024 MTEF the Department in partnership with the City of Cape Town will fund technologies such as ShotSpotter and the Eye in the Sky. This is a waste of taxpayers' money as the ShotSpotter has been proven by many international studies to be unreliable, inaccurate, an ineffective and dangerous gunshot detection tool, which poses serious threats to basic civil rights. A study in 2021 in Chicago found that in a period of 21 months, ShotSpotter resulted in police acting on dead-end reports over 40 000 times.

Another report by the Cook County State Attorney's Office concluded that ShotSpotter had a minimal return in investment and only resulted in arrest for 1% of the proven shootings. Many states across the globe such as Chicago abandoning the use of this technology produced by US Company, SoundThinking, because of its inaccuracy and in unreliability. Even the 97% accuracy the company claims was produced by the marketing Department and not by the engineers. The decision to invest in this technology is not backed by a string of evidence. Surely it is motivated by greed and awarding contracts to US companies who in turn channel funds into the DA.

The Province must not waste taxpayers' money. Money on this technology instead, it must be available, make available funds to install more CCTVs in crime hotspots and ensuring that existing CCTVs are functioning. In

Khayelitsha for instance only a handful CCTVs are operational out of a total of 20, highlighting the DA Government's neglect of poor working class communities. Let us get the basics right. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Ms A BANS: These funds must be used on important things like ensuring there is sufficient lighting and accessibility on informal settlements.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Bans.

Ms A BANS: I thank you, Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much. I now recognise the hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker, when we say that the Western Cape Safety Plan introduced by the Premier of this Province at the start of his term has failed, we do so based on our own experiences which are backed by data and statistics. Deputy Speaker, when the Third Term South African Crime Statistics were introduced covering the period October 2023 to December 2023, the Western Cape was leading the pack nationally on almost every category of crime. In short the province is a den of crime as it appears first on every criminal

element in the whole of South Africa.

Deputy Speaker, Cape Town Central Police Station retained its number one spot when it comes to police stations with the most reported crimes in the whole country. In the same category the Western Cape features with a total of seven police stations, where serious crimes reported, out of 30 police stations nationally.

In other words the Western Cape appears with the majority of police stations where crime is immense. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to contact crime Mfuleni also retained its top number one spot with 1 238 reported crimes and in the same category our province features nine police stations in a total out of 30. Deputy Speaker, Mfuleni also repeats itself on second spot when it comes to stations where a high number of murder rate was reported, and in this category the Western Cape feature with 11 police stations out of 30. Moreover to round up, when it comes to sexual offences, rape, common assault, robbery and carjacking, the Western Cape also leads the pack nationally, and features with the following areas: Mfuleni for the first two categories, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town and Philippi respectively.

It is further important to note that when it comes to carjacking, the Western Cape feature three areas in the top five nationally, which is Philippi East, Harare and Nyanga.

Deputy Speaker, I must reiterate the EFF's position that this is concerning

when taking into account that since the beginning of this term when the Premier took office, millions of rands was spent on the so-called Safety Plan which is not yielding any results. It makes no sense why taxpayers' money would be splashed like this and then crime just continues to grow as if there is no government or any policing structures in place.

Deputy Speaker, it is shocking that in the Western Cape we have a Provincial Government which is scared of extortionists who roam around charging people protection fees. This situation has gotten worse to an extent that they realise that the Provincial Government is weak and now they are demanding tenders by force in State construction sectors.

In conclusion, Deputy Speaker, later we are told that the Provincial Government cannot finish housing constructions because the extortionists and mafias have occupied those building sites and are demanding ransom.

For these reasons, Deputy Speaker, we cannot be voting for a party that cannot protect our people in the Western Cape. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you hon Cassiem. I now recognise the hon Little.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. This Province's Administration seems to be confused as to whether they are contributing and thus also responsible for the outcomes of safety and security, or not. On the other hand

they are quick to lay blame at the National Government for any safety and security outcome that is negative, but on the other hand they claim any successes.

With the amount of budget allocated to LEAP Officers and Cape Town high tech investment, with Safety and Security one would think that they do have a claim to both failures and successes.

What is not ever mentioned with regards to the Provincial funded LEAP Officers is that they are being utilised to evict tenants from rental stock without the necessary Court orders. To be honest, the City of Cape Town should take full responsibility for the safety and security issues and the crime-ridden areas on the Cape Flats. These are slums created by the apartheid regime which has not been maintained by the City of Cape Town, neither upgraded. In actual fact they keep creating more of these by constantly evicting and moving those living on the streets to outskirts of the city.

Now we would see the amount of money that has been allocated to technology like R30 million for a ShotSpotter where we could have seen that type of money being implemented in a more effective way. The same Department gives R7 million to Neighbourhood Watches and only 900 to community policing. That R30 million spent on ShotSpotter would have been more effective if given to Neighbourhood Watches on the Cape Flats. This is against the natural policy and exposes the DA-led Department's bias and

double standards.

MEC Allen is also on record as stating that the Western Cape has an estimated 100 000 gang members, yet the DA Provincial Safety Plan has no integrated strategy to deal with gangsterism, drugs or extortion. I thank you, Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much hon Little. I now recognise the hon Christians.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Deputy Speaker, as I said in this House before and I say it again; we need the devolution of powers and it is starting with the police powers. Therefore the ACDP supports the Powers Bill.

National Government has failed us and this Province will never have enough money to fight crime because it is not your responsibility, it is the responsibility of the National Government, but, Deputy Speaker, I want to ask this question because the problem that we have also is the corruption within our police.

Now the Premier has also tried and asked the Police Ombudsman to look in this when we saw in the papers, a Western Cape High Court Judge says the 28s has captured the Western Cape police, prosecutors, and their lives are at risk, and then I think it was handed over to police and nothing happened, so

maybe the MEC in his oversight role needs to tell us, when you fight crime, but when you have rotten apples you must get rid of them otherwise we are fighting a losing battle.

Another important thing, Deputy Chair, is of course, the Minister will know I am very passionate about the Neighbourhood Watches, very passionate about the Police Forums, and I still believe and as the ACDP we believe that they must be capacitated more because it is your Neighbourhood Watch, it is your auntie that stays in the road, it is your uncle that stays, they know what is happening in communities. If we give them more they will be able to do more, so that is my plea again, and looking for a funeral cover to protect them, and I have asked the Department to look at the survey to ask what is needed to assist them.

We can do this together but the important thing is, and I am closing with this, we need to get rid of corrupt policemen and women. There are good ones but there are bad ones and we must get rid of them. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much hon Christians. I now recognise the hon Bosman.

Mr G BOSMAN: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Deputy Speaker, we are at an inflection point. As I rise this afternoon I think it is worth noting that we in this Chamber have the immense privilege of concluding the last Vote of the last budget that this iteration of the Western

Cape Provincial Parliament may pass in this term.

Over the last five years we have seen this Government do its level best to make the Western Cape a better place, a safer place. It is a good time to take stock and a time that naturally encourages us to self-reflect. We must ask ourselves what has happened in the last five years? What has been done? Can we say that we fulfilled our mandate and our promise to those who elected us to this House? How have Premier Alan Winde and his Cabinet performed in the last half decade? In the same period what has President Cyril Ramaphosa and his confederation of cronies done to improve the safety of our people in our province?

Speaker, five years ago this Government was formed with a clear mandate and clear goals in mind. Crime in the Western Cape, indeed in South Africa is nothing new. The gangs, the thieves, the extortionists, these problems have been around for decades and have permeated every aspect of our lives and they have occupied the streets and the pavements where I grew up. They are the reason we lock our doors with anti-burglar bars and volunteer our time to our Neighbourhood Watches at night, and they are a problem that refuses to go away.

Five years ago this Government did what no other government in this country will ever do, if the ANC stays in charge. They did what no other government had the will to do. It brought a new approach to crime, building on the successes of previous DA Governments. This Government instituted the

Western Cape Safety Plan, a plan that boldly seeks to reduce the murder rate by half by 2029 and unlike some governments, this Government then took the bold action necessary to make this goal a reality. We instituted K9 Units to interrupt and eradicate the smuggling and transit of illegal goods across our province, including drugs such as Tik and Mandrax which fuel violence destruction and the break-up of the social fabric of this province. This Government has worked with local municipalities to implement rural safety units which provide support in policing in some of our most remote and far-flung areas of the Western Cape, and of course this Government has implemented the LEAP Officers, dedicated units who use the best technology available to rapidly respond to crime in some of the Western Cape's most violent and dangerous communities.

In many cases these officers arrive faster and they are more effective and are better trusted by the public than SAPS officers whom they are supposed to merely assist. What we see in LEAP is a model of what policing could be in South Africa if only given a chance, which I am sure the voters will give us overwhelmingly on 29 May.

Speaker, it is working, LEAP is working. LEAP Officers have participated in more than 27 000 arrests. They have confiscated hundreds of illegal firearms. The SAPS precincts that are supposed to be assisted by LEAP Officers which they assist so ably have steadily fallen down the ranks of the most violent areas. We see where we deploy LEAP those police stations improve in their efficiencies, in their response time, and in their ability to prevent crime.

As I mentioned on Monday the level of trust in our LEAP Officers surpasses that of the South African Police Service and we see that when communities ask us for more LEAP Officers. It is easy to see why, in the same period that LEAP and other interventions of this Government have existed, SAPS in the Western Cape has collapsed.

Through you, hon Speaker, my colleague and dear friend, hon Bans, spoke about the ANC's plan when the ANC was in charge. I was in high school then. I can hardly remember because we struggled to walk to school, but what I do know is that there was just under five million people living in the City of Cape Town at that time, and the ANC still struggled. We have more people living in this province and we are able to do more than the ANC did then.

Last year SAPS Senior Management sat in this Chamber and told us that at an absolute bare minimum they needed 20 000 members to police the Western Cape. Speaker, currently our SAPS numbers in the Western Cape stand at more than 3 000 below that and they continue to fall. Less than 3 000 detectives are left in the Western Cape and perhaps this is why 62% of serious crimes in the Western Cape go unsolved. 77% of SAPS postings in the Western Cape are understaffed and those few poor SAPS members who come to work and do their utmost in dangerous situations are drastically and chronically under-equipped and underpaid. No wonder the people of this province are losing trust in SAPS's ability to help them. Least of all communities on the Cape Flats who have in some cases become so frustrated

with Minister Bheki Cele's circus that they have taken to chasing them out of their communities.

Unlike the National Government under the ANC, Deputy Speaker, this Government also sees crime in more than one dimension. Mahatma Gandhi once said: "All crime is a disease and should be treated as such."

That is why I am so proud of this Government for working not only on the cures of crime but the prevention too. The Department in conjunction with that of Social Development maintains the Chrysalis Academy which provides magnificent training and education to our youth allowing them to return to their communities to act as positive role models and forces of change. There is also a reason that the Committee in which I chair also considers the realm of Cultural Affairs and Sports as one element because they run after school programs to provide a positive environment for at-risk youth, thus interrupting the flow of recruits to gangs – another critical ingredient for the inferno of violence this Government is stomping out.

As we consider this budget at the end of this term it is also worth asking ourselves what will be said about us five years into the future. Will future parliamentarians look back with the judgment of hindsight and conclude that we all did what we could to bring the meagre resources that this Government receives from National Government to bear on criminals in a meaningful and forceful manner and how have we helped those victims. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to say that this budget sets the stage to continue the fine work of this

Government in fighting crime and criminality. This budget sees LEAP remain fully funded to the tune of more than R350 million, R9 935 000 will be transferred to local municipalities for more rural safety units, while a further R11,3 million will go to the K9 units. R25 million will be allocated to the construction of LEAP centres, something which will become increasingly important as SAPS continues to collapse and LEAP increasingly begins to take its place in the minds and in the hearts of the community we serve. Increasingly, Speaker, the choice between the DA and the ANC is progressively simple. LEAP or SAPS, jobs or unemployment, growth or recession, success or failure, life or death.

One thing that every party in this House can agree on is that these elections coming up are the most important in three decades. We cannot continue as we are. What happens over the next five years is up to the voter. It is up to me, it is up to you, to every single South African voter watching this debate today. There will be 56 parties on the National ballot this year, but what all of us must understand is that the choice before us is a binary one.

Through you, hon Speaker, I want to address what hon Cassiem said. The Western Cape DA takes Mfuleni very seriously. That is why they have allocated me as the constituency head for Mfuleni. The Western Cape DA, the Western Cape DA takes Nyanga very seriously, that is why they made me the PR councillor for Ward 39 in Nyanga, and before that the PR councillor for Ward 13 in Delft.

I want to echo through you, hon Deputy Speaker, the thanks of member Ayanda Bans to the Provincial Commissioner of Police in the Western Cape [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order members!

Mr G BOSMAN: ...and I also want to thank all the men and women in blue, all the men and women across the province, police officers sitting protecting us in this Chamber and police officers and LEAP Officers, law enforcement officers, who put their lives on the line every day, all of those good officers from warrant officer to major general for all their hard work.

Specifically I want to thank the officers who are scientists at the Forensic Science Lab in Platteklouf, dedicated officers working hard to test all the illegal firearms that LEAP takes off the streets; dedicated officers who test all the specimens that come from crime scenes and those who work under extremely difficult circumstances in terms of health and safety in the workplace, where the air conditioners sometimes do not work for weeks at a time.

It is unfair but they work hard, but unfortunately they are controlled by senior police in Pretoria who has no idea of what is happening on the ground and the poor Provincial Commissioner has his hands tied, he can only approve finances up to R50 000 and I pity that decision.

Speaker, these men and women in blue work in some of the most appalling conditions, very similarly to the conditions we have seen at the police stations [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order members!

Mr G BOSMAN: ... that we visited in this term. In addition to thanking the Provincial Commissioner and all the men in blue in the Western Cape, I want to thank the National Police Commissioner, Lieutenant General Fannie Masemola for personally flying down with his entire senior management team to address the Standing Committee on Police Oversight and Community Safety, on not just the status of police stations but updating us on the spate of kidnappings in our province and extortion in our province, and I should mention that as a caveat, since I have been the Chairperson of this portfolio, the Provincial Commissioner has never himself come to our Committee. He has always only sent capable men and women, but we would have loved to see him as well.

On a personal note, Deputy Speaker, as we end the term there are some people I wish to thank. Those of us present this morning during the Vote of Cultural Affairs and Sport would have heard some of my acknowledgments there and specifically the vital aspect that I placed on that portfolio and how it develops our communities. I want to extend a personal thank you to my mom, Ms Petula Goodall, my rock and sound guide of support who sometimes very late at night, like last night called me all the way from Saldanha to give

me an update on the politicking around little Joshlin's case and to tell me how hard the community is working in Saldanha to locate little Joshlin. Thank you, mom.

I want to thank my predecessor, friend and colleague Minister Reagan Allen, his staff led by the capable HOD Advocate Yashina Pillay and all of the members of DOCS, singling out specifically the men and women who provide security services sometimes frontline in our buildings. Thank you for your hard work. Whatever our viewpoints in this House on the policies that this Department implements, few can deny the passion and heart that this entire Department brings to their work and for that I thank you all.

I would also like to again thank Mr Waseem Matthews whose hard work as the Procedural Officer on this portfolio has been second to none. His knowledge of the SAPS Rank System and his penchant for diplomatic language has stood us in great stead. Thank you to the Committee Services team led by Mr Mario Sassman and Mr Ben Daza, two colleagues who always look so calm in the face of a storm whether it is a procurement storm, trying to get buses approved, and trying to get members to venues.

A special thank you to my very first Procedural Officer Ms Nomonde Jamce for showing me the ropes and making sure I hang on to those ropes in a procedural way, especially in times when we have been tested in this Committee. Thank you to Ms Mary-Anne Burgess for ensuring that this Committee is ably assisted. Thank you also to the WCPP Legal Team led by

Advocate Andre le Roux, and a very special thanks to Mr Romeo Maasdorp for his commitment to ensuring that the Committee understands the legal prescripts that guide our important work, even though sometimes we have been advised to act within the parameters of our operations and Mr Allen and I have gone and said we will act with audacity to ensure that we develop the best laws for the people of the Western Cape, because innovation in law-making is key.

I would like to thank my personal staff and particularly my secretary Ms Stephanie Thorpe who has been instrumental in helping me head, not just into Committee meetings prepared but importantly keeping me on time for schedules and meetings.

A special thank you to the entire DA Western Cape Media Team, a team ably led by Ms Fredericks. Thank you to Mr Ryan Hand, my talented young researcher with a firm grasp on the challenges of the Community Safety Portfolio and thank you Ryan for understanding that crime is a disease and that it must be treated as one, with solutions from all over the world. Mr Hand understands that to be excellent we have to be open-minded and innovative.

Thank you members of this House, to the Cabinet led by the Premier for your collegiality and the spirited debate that lasted over the five years whether in this House or in our Committee, because believe it or not, the Community Safety Committee called the Premier a few times to talk about the Safety

Plan, and I hope that before 2029 members opposite me will read the Safety Plan, please.

While my thanks to my own party caucus on this side goes without saying, I would also like to thank our fine members opposite. We have put an admirable effort into the role that we play holding this Government to account. I look forward to seeing you continue your work in opposition after the next election here. This House has seen much disagreement and even discord at times, but I would like to think that the motions, debates, policies, and many, many points of order we have debated in this House, have ultimately been in the service of a common goal of making the Western Cape a better place. It has been my honour to be part of that.

Hon Speaker, on behalf of the Democratic Alliance, I support this Vote and for the final time, I thank you.

Nkosi kakulu. †Baie dankie. [Thank you.]

[The Speaker takes the Chair.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much hon Bosman. I recognise the hon Minister, Minister Allen.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:
Thank you so much, Speaker. I was listening attentively together with

dealing with a particular matter with member Sayed because we would never want news that there has been certain shootings in our area and in our communities, so we are attending to that particular one but it does seem that it is a positive matter.

I have one page. I will be as brief as possible and I will trust that the Speaker can even stop me in five minutes, so let me do this. On prioritising, when I hear the word that we are not prioritising, we are. We are actually also making solid recommendations to National SAPS when we see that more money and more funding is allocated to VIP Protection Services as opposed to the Hawks, it is deeply concerning. So we take prioritising extremely serious here within our province. Speaker, I will be the very first MEC that on 15 April will actually be co-signing the CPF Constitution – the very first MEC that will literally sign and co-sign that particular Constitution.

We have had numerous engagements. We have had our legal opinion from the Department of the Premier and we can confirm that our work and our engagements with the CPF is always ongoing. I would want to dispel the rumours around the funding towards Neighbourhood Watches and CPFs, it is totally misplaced. When we consider that we have 151 CPFs for new members, it is only because we have 151 police stations, but we have hundreds of Neighbourhood Watches, almost triple the amount of CPFs, so I would want to dispel that particular argument.

In terms of the LEAP Officers I would want to dispel that again, we have

indicated in this House that we believe in excellence, we believe in *Fit for Purpose*, so whenever any particular officer, and this is our stand with the South African Police Service as well, if an officer fails to meet the requirements, the requirements that are inherent to perform a certain function, if the person does not qualify, we cannot place that person at risk, we cannot place that person in an area like Hanover Park or in Mitchells Plain, because that person will be at risk because he or she did not meet the requirements in terms of firearm competency, in terms of a driving license, in terms of fitness, so we are doing it to protect the relevant officer that wants to become a LEAP officer, and there was nothing untoward, it is ultimately that the job requirement specifies that there is a contract obligation that needs to be met by the LEAP Officer. On the new recruits I am delighted to hear that member Bans said that she will not be surprised if we have trained more than 10 000 LEAP Officers, which is testimony that we are always pushing above our weight and that we are always doing amazing things that it often sounds unbelievable to members of this House to actually believe. So thank you member Bans, but I can confirm that is not the amount, but thank you for giving us that confidence that you think that we would be training over 10 000 LEAP Officers within a period of three and a half years.

The areas are currently at 14 and not at 13 because the Premier wants us to be agile, he wants us to be data led and we might have a conversation, because the data says that we might have to reduce it, and we will be bold enough to make those decisions because crime is complex, we need to be agile, we need to be one step ahead of gangsters, so that particular number of priority areas

might even be reduced or it might even be increased, but we will take the public and take this House into our confidence, but I can confirm it is not 13 at the moment, it is currently 14.

The HOD adequately in the Standing Committee explained why the shift happened. The HOD, myself and the Premier had detailed conversations and she took the Standing Committee into her confidence, so I would not want to discuss that again. When I hear ShotSpotter I would want to speak slowly here, Speaker. [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: I would want to speak slowly here, ShotSpotter, for December to April for Hanover Park and Manenberg, because of ShotSpotter 21 firearms, 288 arrests in the area of Hanover Park directly linked to ShotSpotter where there was activation and the activation led to that arrest. 21 firearms, 288 rounds of ammunition. For Manenberg, it was 11 firearms, 101 rounds of ammunition and 16 arrests directly linked, because ShotSpotter would be an early warning. It is a technology. It is a tool of trade that can be used to bolster policing. It is not a silver bullet. It is a tool to bolster communities, and I can even take the member back. The member will have a little bit of trouble in speaking to her national counterparts because on 2 June and a quick Google search will confirm this, 2 June 2023, the National Minister went on record that the South African Police Service at the national level is at an advanced

stage in terms of procuring gunshot-detection technology and here we hear the ANC in the Western Cape is saying that this particular technology is ineffective and every piece of evidence is showing that it does not work, but here the National Government is on record to say that they are at an advanced stage, but we know, it is now almost a year. That advanced stage still did not materialise, so, that is another story. So it is, that is on member Bans now. So in the last two minutes, member Cassiem, thank you so much. Member Cassiem I do feel, I did feel the stuff that you have said. I again calculated that for the three minutes that was allocated to the EFF, if it is 120 words per minute for three minutes that is roughly 360 words. Sadly it was 360 words that did not contribute because I heard that LEAP did not yield any results and just minutes before I have clearly indicated that there were 564 illegal firearms taken off our streets and one firearm contributes towards potentially killing twelve people and to then hear a member of this House to say that the Safety Plan has not yielded any results. It is part of that particular 210 000 words that should never have been spewed in this particular Chamber. That is all I want to say in that regard.

In terms of member Little, member Little I would be more than happy to have a conversation with you because we have been very clear, and the Premier have been very clear that we are leading to ensure that our LEAP Officers are in our priority areas at a certain time. They undertake certain operations and I can confirm, they do not do evictions. They do not do evictions!

If you have information on a license plate, on a LEAP Officer's name tag, of

a LEAP officer that have done evictions, please send that to me and we will make sure that we look into it. This is a question that I have asked previously because this particular rumour is being shared widely and I would not want it to become a rumour because our hon member will understand that if they have information of concern, if that is sent to my office I will make sure that the officials actually look into it, because the LEAP Officers do not do that. They do other particular matters that lead towards safer communities. [Interjection.]

Ms S LITTLE: I will do so, Speaker.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: Thank you so much, member, so that we can look into it. In terms of the Integrated Crime Strategy we actually have that Integrated Crime Strategy and I again want to echo on ShotSpotter, on the gunshot technology, it is a tool that we use, we use evidence. We use systems to ensure that we can ultimately move forward, but the one way, Speaker, is to ensure that we actually have the resources, that we actually have a crime intelligence led South African Police Service that can curb crime. So that is all I want to echo at this particular time, but thank you so much for the input, and member Christians, it is highly appreciated, but it was the Father of the House that said three hours ago and I did a quick search now, †en hy het gesê “dit is net die Here wat hom tot hier gedra het”, [and he said “it is only the Lord that has carried him to here”], and as the member that is the most senior and probably the most experienced, †ek wil sê baie dankie, [I want to say thank you,]

because I have learned from so many people here, †maar dit is net die Here wat ons tot hier gedra het en die Psalmdigter sê "Wat sal ek die Here vergeld vir al sy weldade." [but it is only the Lord who carried us to here and the Psalmist says "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?]

†So Premier, baie dankie, dit is 'n groot voorreg om te kan dien en om te kan help, [So Premier, thank you, it is a great privilege to be able to serve and to help,] because that is what we want to do. So thank you also member Nkondlo for all that you do. I can speak for another five minutes because †ek het opgegroeï met 'n spraakprobleem, [because I grew up with a speech problem,] but if you stop, I will stop. Are you ready to stop? [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order members!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: So thank you so much, Premier, and to each and everyone. Thank you. I respect you so much.

[Debate concluded.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much hon Minister.

Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. The House will now suspend for a couple of seconds to allow the guests of Minister Allen to leave

the officials' bay.

[Business of the House suspended for clearing of bays.]

The SPEAKER: Order members! Order! The Secretary will read the seventh Order of the Day.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Order. The Secretary will read the Seventh Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Consideration of Votes and Schedule of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, I have to announce that there are currently 35 hon members present and entitled to vote, and the House is therefore quorate. Parties now have an opportunity to make a declaration covering all the Votes. I will now afford parties an opportunity to make a declaration if they so wish. I recognise the ANC. No declaration. I recognise the EFF. [Interjections.] Order, hon members. [Interjections.] Hon members, we are busy with the process. I recognise the EFF.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, hon Speaker. The EFF does not support any of the Budget Votes. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise GOOD. I recognise

GOOD. I recognise the ACDP.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: No declaration, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the Freedom Front Plus.

Mr P J MARAIS: The Freedom Front Plus supports the Bill in its entirety.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise Al Jama-Ah. I now recognise the Democratic Alliance.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker, the Western Cape Appropriation Bill is geared towards building a better future for all residents of this province. It is a continuous focus on protecting education, health, and social development from National Government budget cuts. It is especially important for poorer communities who depend on these services the most. This budget is being tabled in an extremely challenging economic and fiscal environment driven by the reckless agreement of an unaffordable public wage increase by National Government.

Over the MTEF, 75% of the Provincial Budget will be spent on services and infrastructure that benefits our most vulnerable residents. This comes amidst another round of National Government cuts equally to a R6,36-billion reduction to the Provincial Budget over the MTEF, with a R1,1-billion being cut from Conditional Grants to the Western Cape over the same period.

These past two days we have heard in almost every single Vote how budgets must increase, from the Opposition, but no hon member has come to indicate from which budget that money must be taken or where that funding will come from, but I expect no less from people who have led us into a situation where we now have to sell off our gold in order to pay for the country's debt. The DA knows the value of people's money and it will be spent on the people.

Hon Speaker, I want to use the rest of my time just to thank, again, Ms Kamish-Ahmat, our Procedural Officer and the Senior Procedural Officer, Ms Lizette Cloete. Your assistance on the Committee and help have ensured that we really moved mountains on matters such as Division of Revenue legislation. Further, I would like to thank the members on the Committee, hon member Murray, America, Mvimbi, and Brinkhuis. I also want to thank previous hon members who are now hon Minister Mackenzie and also, what I call our permanent alternates, hon member Nkondlo. Your input on the Committee is truly wonderful and I really enjoy how robust the Committee has been over the years.

I further want to just thank previous hon Minister Maynier on this portfolio, as well as current hon Minister Wenger. You have always been open to innovation and ideas, and how we can make sure that the people's money is always spent on the people.

To the Premier's Office official, Ms Ishmail, for some of the best monitoring

and evaluation reporting I have ever seen in my life and who will soon become Dr Ishmail. To previous HOD Savage and HOD Gantana, as well as the Treasury officials and I want to single out Ms Pick as well. Your expertise and honest has assisted this Committee in ensuring proper oversight over finances in this Province.

I want to thank this Committee because the Budget Committee is the first in the country to use WhatsApp as a means for public participation and this Western Cape Provincial Parliament can clap hands because this is now in every single committee. We have also had groundbreaking work on money Bills, and I can honestly say that the DA is committed to well-drafted legislation, and because of this work we now have wonderful relationships with institutions like the National Treasury, the FFC, the Childrens' Commissioner that even with their children make inputs on the budget now, as well as even SARS.

And I want to just conclude by indicating, hon Speaker, the DA supports this Budget. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much and that is also the end of the three minutes. Hon members, that concludes the Declarations on the Consideration of the Votes and the Schedule of the Bill. Are there any objections to the Votes 1 to 14, and the Schedule of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill?

An HON MEMBER: Object.

The SPEAKER: There is an objection. I am now going to put the question to the House that those in favour of the Votes and the Schedules of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill being adopted, please say 'yes'.

Hon MEMBERS: Yes!

The SPEAKER: Those not in favour of the Votes and the Schedule of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill being adopted, please say no.

Hon MEMBERS: No!

The SPEAKER: I think the ayes have it. The Votes and the Schedule of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill has therefore been adopted. The Secretary will read the Eighth Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Finalisation of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill including the clauses and the short title.

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

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Thank you, hon Speaker. I ask that this Western Cape Appropriation Bill to keep building a Western Cape that Works for All, be finalised.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. There being no list of speakers, are there any objections to the Bill, the clauses and the short title being finalised?

Hon MEMBERS: Object.

The SPEAKER: There is an objection and I have to announce that there are currently 35 hon members present and entitled to vote, and the House is therefore quorate. Those in favour of the Bill, the clauses and the short title being finalised, please say 'yes'.

Hon MEMBERS: Yes!

The SPEAKER: Those not in favour of the Bill, the clauses and the short title being finalised, please say 'no'.

Hon MEMBERS: No.

The SPEAKER: I think the ayes have it. The finalisation including clauses and the short title of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1 – 2024] are therefore approved. The Secretary will read the Bill.

The SECRETARY: Western Cape Appropriation Bill.

The SPEAKER: The Bill will be sent to the hon Premier for assent. The Secretary will read the Ninth Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Consideration of Report of the Committee on Public Accounts, having considered, as part of its oversight role, the 2022/2023 Annual Reports of the 13 departments of the Western Cape Government, including their entities.

The SPEAKER: I have been informed by the Chief Whip that the Programming Authority resolved that there would be no list of speakers and the parties who wish to do a declaration will be afforded an opportunity to do so on the report, for a maximum of three minutes if they so desire. I will now afford political parties an opportunity to make their declarations. I recognise the ANC.

Mr L L MVIMBI: Thank you very much, hon Speaker and to all other hon members in the House. While I speak on behalf of the ANC, but I also speak as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. The report itself has been circulated to everybody and it was self-explanatory. The report is a reflection of the work of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. It is a culmination of the interaction of the Standing Committee with the departments, various departments of the Province, as well as its entities: 13 departments in total, as well as 11 entities together with their Audit Committees.

It was a very robust and a healthy interaction characterised by frank and open discussion. This report is therefore a product of those robust discussions. I would also like to make use of this opportunity to thank all the departments and their entities, led by their Ministers, by their HODs, as well as the entities led by their CEOs of the various entities, as well as the Chairperson of the Audit Committees for their cooperation, as well as their attendance during these sessions, and as well as their contributions during this interaction of this section.

And of course, I would like to thank the members of the committees, permanent members as well as alternate members, even those we call alternate, permanent alternates. In particular, the members of the Committee, hon Maseko, hon America, hon Sileku, as well as our permanent alternate, hon Nkondlo. [Interjections.] Thank you. Thank you very much for the support, as well as the former member, hon Mackenzie as well. There was one thing with that Committee: once a member of that Committee, you are always a member of the Committee. [Interjections.]

And know also, hon Baartman as well. She was one of those who was always very active in the contribution. There is one thing we were always united about in that Committee, hon Speaker, that when it comes to accountability, we had a way of not playing politics. We were always successful in keeping politics out of accountability and we were always unanimous even in taking decisions. And I think even when it comes to voting, I think there was maybe

once or twice that we voted. So, that is the spirit in which we were actually taking accountability seriously.

Last, but not least, hon Speaker, I would like to thank the staff of the Committee, in particular the Senior Procedural Officer, Ms Lizette Cloete, as well as the Procedural Officer, Mr Dustin Davids, who was actually the full-time Procedural Officer. He was always available to work very hard and diligently, and also, professionally so. I have always been intrigued in the manner of how professional he was. I also learnt that he was doing all that because he has two Masters, in Public Finance as well as actually a Masters in Law. And I think that is what has actually been able to keep that Committee and it has been actually the experience of 13 years in that.

But also ...[Interjections.] not ignoring the work of the person who has always been keeping the record ...[Interjections.], Ms Nomfundo Masobela. [Interjections.] They have actually been the engine that has actually been driving that Committee and that is why the Committee has always been very successful in expediting its work. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Mvimbi. Hon members, you will note that it was longer than three minutes and I have deliberately allowed that because I think thank yous are important. I recognise the EFF. The EFF? GOOD?

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Speaker. While the hon Premier and the hon

Ministers have spent there a lot of time praising themselves and this Administration for all their successes, I would like to spend my allotted time reminding the hon Premier and the hon Ministers on why it is a near impossible task to trust what is being presented to us over the past few days to vote on.

After five years of this Administration, the Western Cape is still categorised by asset and income inequality and spatial segregation that perpetuates a tale of two provinces. The 16% White demographic still enjoys the lion's share of the Western Cape's R654-billion gross domestic product. This DA-led Western Cape Treasury still confirms that it is not implementing a 30% target procurement policy, which is designed to channel public procurement opportunities to historically disadvantaged groups, such as Africans, Coloureds and Indians, women, youth, people with disabilities.

Out of the 45 positions in the senior to top management positions in the Western Cape Education Department, only four are held by Africans. The DA's Michael Cardo and John de Villiers publicly opposed the 9,7% increment for a minimum wage for low-earning workers such as farmworkers and domestic workers. The Western Cape Province's Provincial Department of Human Settlements incurred biased irregular expenditure of an astronomical R171-million and its under-expenditure of Conditional Grants exceeding R215-million ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

Ms S LITTLE: ...in the 2022/2023 ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Little, my apologies for interrupting you. I am just calling you on relevance to the report that is in front of the House for a declaration.

Ms S LITTLE: This is my declaration, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The declaration needs to be directly linked to the report that the House will, after this declaration, vote on. So, I am just cautioning you.

Ms S LITTLE: May I continue?

The SPEAKER: I will allow you to continue, but I am cautioning you and if you can bring it back to the report, please.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Speaker. The Hon Premier and the predecessor wasted R5-million of taxpayer's money on fighting the Tafelberg School case, a site earmarked for social housing in Sea Point.

We still do not have clarity on the R700-million spent by the Education Department during COVID-19, and why the hon MEC left in such a hurry. Unfortunately, the time allotted does not allow me to list all the failures of this Administration. It is these failures that make many others that lend

...[Interjection]

The SPEAKER: Honourable, hon Little. There is a point of order in the House. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Thank you, hon Speaker. I again raise the issue of relevance considering this is declaration in respect of the SCOPA Report before the House.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon member, this is the second caution. The report in front of the House is the SCOPA Report for all the 13 entities. So, I am cautioning you, otherwise, I will unfortunately have to move on to the next declaration.

Ms S LITTLE: That is fine, hon Speaker. Thank you. This Parliament in its current state being manipulated from within with suggestions of increased membership, devolution and secession in order to suit specific agendas ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, honourable, hon Little.

Ms S LITTLE: Thank you, hon Speaker. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Hon Little, thank you very much. I will move on to the ACDP.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: No declaration.

The SPEAKER: I recognise the Freedom Front Plus.

Mr P J MARAIS: If I can just say on behalf of the Freedom Front Plus, I believe much has been done with very little. It proves, this report proves that you can speak a lot of words and like in Hamlet's reply to Polonius when Polonius asked him:

“What did you read?”

He said:

“Words, words, words.”

Meaningless. So, what I have heard now was meaningless and that is all I want to say. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members. [Interjections.] Order. [Interjections.] Order. I recognise Al Jama-Ah. I recognise the EFF.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, hon Speaker. No declaration on this one. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the Democratic Alliance.

Ms L M MASEKO (DA): Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I just want to support the report and also thank our Chairperson, hon member Mvimbi, who has been the captain. And I am again being fortunate to serve a second term in the [Inaudible] started where the hon member from the ACDP and ...[Interjections.] because we believe in transparency, then we gave the ANC also to come and look at what it is that we are doing from the departments as a DA Government.

I agree with the hon member that one of the Committee that we have never politicized in. It has been about the value for money for communities of the Western Cape and we diligently so have done our oversight role when we interrogate the Annual Reports. We made sure that where there needs to be changes, we will communicate with the departments to do that.

It has been such an honour to serve with hon Mvimbi and my favourite Chairperson of Mobility, hon member America, and hon member Sileku who joined us later. Who was the other permanent member? And hon member Cayla Murray also. So, it has been really, really an honour.

But I want to highlight something in the Department, in this Government that the Western Cape is the only province where when we deal with the Annual Reports, we interrogate every entity and their departments. In this country,

there is no government that is open to be scrutinised with their annual reports. The other provinces have been trying very hard to come to the Western Cape to come and see our cycle, how we go about it in interrogating our Annual Reports and how we go about making sure that we do due diligence when coming to the oversight roles. It is quite commendable that.

I think when the new term starts, it is going to be, and this is not from the DA members only, it is also where the provinces are run by the ANC. The unfortunate part that I can mention today is we have got the South African Public Accounts where they also had difficulty in making sure that they have got their Annual Reports. It is one thing that for the new term, members of SCOPA have to look into that because, hon Speaker, you pay the affiliation fee in that organisation that we have to make sure they do due diligence also country-wise. If we have to make a difference in the country, SCOPA will be that organisation which will be the one that we can use to teach other colleagues in other public accounts committees soon you will get their governments.

That means that ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: [Interjection.]

Ms L M MASEKO (DA): Thank you very much, hon Speaker and hon members. Thank you very much for being sterling in your jobs and really, really, for all the departments for clean audits. You know, when you tell

people that they did well in something that they are doing all the time, it is like there is nothing. But we appreciate every contribution that they do within the Government. And hon member Mvimbi, thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. [Interjections.] Hon members. Hon members, I have to announce that there are currently 35 hon members present and entitled to vote, and the House is therefore quorate. The question put before the House is that the report of the Committee on Public Accounts be adopted. Are there any objections to the report being adopted? No objections, agreed to. The report on the Committee on Public Accounts has therefore been adopted.

Hon members, we are reaching the end of this Sitting, and I will now afford representatives of parties an opportunity to address the House on the occasion of the end of the Parliamentary Term. But before I do that for the political parties, I think it is only right that I allow the hon Deputy Speaker to do her farewell and last comments to the House. So, hon Deputy Speaker, I am going to ask you to do it from the Chair.

[The Deputy Speaker takes the Chair.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. It is a great privilege to be able to stand here today. You told me not be ...[Applause.] Thanks. After a decade of committed and passionate service in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, the time has come for me to step aside and

venture into a new and exciting journey in my life. Reflecting on these last 10 years has brought a kaleidoscope of emotions: proud of our collective achievements, gratitude for the camaraderie, grateful for the challenges that have spurred my own personal growth and a sense of fulfilment from the impact that we have collectively made.

Today, I invoke the spirits, hon Speaker, of dropping the mic as I leave this esteemed House. The foundation of Parliament is sturdy. Our accomplishments are vast and our vision for South Africa is clear. But before I depart, please allow me the opportunity to thank the hon Speaker, for your wonderful leadership, your friendship that I have really been privileged to serve under. It is a fantastic privilege to have had you as Speaker. To my PA, Shamiela, and to Etienne and Anthony for an incredible working relationship. We are like family, and we have been family for the past six years.

Hon members, we have set the stage for enduring progress and as I pass the torch, I am confident in the continued prosperity and innovation of this Western Cape Provincial Parliament which will define our collective future and set the course for a better Western Cape for all. I thank you. [Applause.]

[The Speaker takes the Chair.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. I now recognise the ANC.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Speaker, hon members and
[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...hon members and our distinguished guests that are in the gallery, staff members as well. As we approach the end of this particular term in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature, it is a moment for reflection, celebration and yes, a bit of friendly banter. We weathered the storms, navigated the political currents and stood firm in our commitment to serving the people of this beautiful province.

We lost two hon members of this House in tragic circumstances. The memory of hon Maurencia Gillion, a delegate to the NCOP, and the hon Botha, our former Chairperson of the Education Standing Committee with whom we served, as well as the Chief Whip of the Majority Party. We will never forget your contributions.

But as we bid adieu to this term, we cannot help, but cast our gaze towards the horizon where on 29 May 2024, South Africa will once again, engage in the democratic process through national and provincial elections. It is a time for citizens to exercise their sacred right to vote. As the African National Congress, we urge everyone to cast their votes and to make their voices heard regardless of whom they vote for.

We should also realise that democracy can never just be about a vote every five years. We need active citizens and accountability, irrespective of who is in Government. We all know the importance of service delivery, the lifeblood of any functioning democracy. And while we may engage in spirited debates and disagreements, let us not forget that our primary goal is to uplift the lives of South Africans irrespective of their political affiliation.

We need to be always guided by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It provides a clear basis for unity and diversity, respect for human rights and the imperative of redress and transformation to address the unfair discrimination suffered by the majority of South Africans. Let us act in both word and deed to ensure a free and fair election. It is a matter of pride that the Independent Electoral Commission has been able to conduct free and fair elections since 1994.

May these elections, regardless of the result, unite us and not further divide our society. It is critical that we accept the democratic outcomes of the 2024 Elections. We must ensure that access to voting stations and the experience of voting must be smooth in every voting station. Special attention must be paid to informal settlements and our rural communities where the infrastructure is of a poor quality. Let us agree on one thing, hon colleagues: we do not need any foreign power to ensure that our elections are free and fair. We have confidence in the Chapter 9 institutions that have been established.

Here in the Western Cape, we have faced various challenges, but we have also seen progress. And while we may have our differences with our hon colleagues across the floor, let us take a moment to appreciate the collegial and cordial way we have conducted our business as a collective, most of the time. From robust debates to oversight visits, we have shown that despite our political differences, our love for this province and country unites us.

So, as we embark on the next chapter of our democratic journey, let us do so with a sense of optimism, unity, and purpose. This has been a time of uncertainty for public representatives. Party processes about lists are never easy. It is not easy for anyone to come to terms with a place on a list which you believe does not do justice to your own value and contribution. My advice is to keep your own sense of self-worth and confidence in your abilities. Sometimes, life hands you difficult cards to play.

Such occasions also provide an important moment for one to reflect, consider, and work out what is important in life. Let us continue to serve the people of the Western Cape and South Africa with diligence, integrity, and above all, commitment to making a positive difference in their lives.

In closing, on behalf of the African National Congress, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each one of you for your dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to our shared vision of a better, brighter future for all. Thank you to the staff of the African National Congress caucus. Thank you to the

Legislature staff who supported us as members of the Provincial Legislature. Thank you and may the spirit of democracy guide us all in the days and years ahead. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Sayed. I recognise the EFF.

Ms A CASSIEM: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, a Sixth Parliament could not have ended soon enough. Last night, the EFF hosted a mass street Iftar in Mitchells Plain. It was a stark reminder of what is at stake in this election. Our people are hungry and unemployed here in the Western Cape and our poor African and Coloured communities are rife with the social ills of crime, gangsterism and drugs.

Hon Speaker, on 29 May 2024, our people will have the opportunity to cast their vote for a humane government. A government that will no longer allow the people of the Western Cape to live like refugees in the land of our forefathers. The incoming EFF government will restore the dignity of our African and Coloured people through the expropriation of land without compensation. Farmworkers in Paarl, Worcester and Ceres in the Cape Winelands region will experience the fruits of their labour when they return the land to its rightful owners.

Hon Speaker, we will revive the once striving clothing and textile industries of Cape Town where every family once had a member that was employed in this lucrative industry. This time, the factors of ownership will be different

as the EFF government intends supporting the CMT entrepreneurs. Hon Speaker, we will revive our fishing communities like Paternoster, in Saldanha and Hout Bay, among others, when the EFF government ensures that our traditional and indigenous subsistence and small-scale fishers are guaranteed access to the ocean. We will provide them with the resources to process, store and market their own products.

Through the EFF's provincial construction companies, we will deliver decent housing and sanitation, build enough schools, hospitals, decent human settlements and construct and maintain bulk infrastructure. We will not have any need to outsource Government's responsibility and in this ...[Audio distorted.] employment artisans. Only the EFF is serious about eradicating crime in all communities and not just on the Atlantic Seaboard. We will ensure that our police services are respected and that criminals quiver at the sight of SAPS. Community safety is such a joke to the DA that they appointed a former comedian as the MEC for Community Safety and Police Oversight.

Hon Speaker, we are the only party with a workable plan to end unnecessary loadshedding because we will eradicate the corruption at Eskom and ensure all coal power stations are serviced and running efficiently. We wish the outgoing hon Premier, Alan Winde, well in his future endeavours. We call on the people across the Western Cape to go out in their numbers to vote for land and jobs and to stop loadshedding now, and lastly, to vote for the EFF. Thank you, hon Speaker.

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

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, for the past five years it has been my privilege to serve as an hon member of this House. During this term, the House experienced lively debates that reflected our commitment to improve the lives of the people we serve. The House was at times subjected to humour and lighter moments. At times we agreed albeit reluctantly, while at times the sparks would fly.

I have worked with hon members who are no longer here and others who have passed to a higher service. I thank every hon member and every party for the years that have come and have gone. We have crossed verbal swords, yet despite this, we have remained friends and acquaintances. It has been my single honour to serve and seek solutions for the challenges we face. As the ACDP, we want to thank hon Premier Alan Winde, the hon Speaker, the hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Ministers, the hon Leader of the Official Opposition, hon members of this House that work tirelessly to make this province a better place.

May the Tri-God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be your portion and guide us as we continue to pursue the best interests of the people we serve. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Saviour. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Christians. I recognise the Freedom Front Plus.

†Mnr P J MARAIS: Agb Speaker, dit is altyd met 'n mate van weemoed dat jy kollegas van vyf jaar soms moet groet. Algemene verkiesings breek noue verbintenisse en self vriendskappe wat ontwikkel het tussen mense. Daarom wil ek aan elkeen aan beide kante van hierdie Huis sê wel gedaan. Julle het die wedloop voltooi na 'n termyn van vyf jaar. Dit was 'n voorreg wat miljoene mense daar buite nooit sal hê nie.

Ek het hierdie einste Parlement waar ek nou sit, vir die eerste keer in 1992 het ek hier gesit. FW de Klerk wat my in 1992 by die huis gebel het en gesê het hy wil my uit die Presidentsraad uit hê, want hy soek my as die LUR vir die Kaapprovinsie. En my verbaas, maar ek het aanvaar as Nasionale Party-lid en ek was die LUR vir Paaie en Werke onder Kobus Muis Meiring wat toe nog die Administrateur was. Daar was nie 'n Premier nie. Hy was die Administrateur en daar was ook nie 'n Wes-Kaap nie. Dit was 'n Kaapprovinsie. Die Wes-Kaap is maar nog 'n jong laatie. Hy is eers in 1994 gedoop.

Dan, was ek ook LUR in hierdie Huis vir Gesondheid. Daarna, plaaslike bestuur. En een van my groot oomblikke was toe het ek die voorreg gehad het om al 30 munisipaliteite in die Wes-Kaap se grense te bepaal. Dit het gelei, soos u almal weet, dat die ANC my hof toe gevat het en Mandela

haastig 'n wet wou geteken het om my van my magte te beroof, agb Premier. Ek het hom hof toe gevat en die saak gewen teen Mandela en agterna het hy vir my 'n brief geskryf:

“You are a very competent and forthright colleague.”

Vriende, ek het uitgetree in 2004 nadat ek Premier geword het, ook Burgemeester van Kaapstad, en ek het uitgetree uit die aktiewe politiek uit. En ek het 15 jaar lekker by die huis gesit totdat die Vryheidsfront vir my gevra het, kom help. En die politieke dier wat ek is, *I always did it my way*. Ek klim toe in die kuil van Afrikanerdom en ek sê net soos die NNP verander het van binne af in die Presidentsraad, gaan ek julle ook kry om te sê 'n Afrikaner is nie 'n Witman wat Afrikaans praat nie. Ek gaan aansluit. En hier staan ek.

En ek wil sê vir die agb Premier van hierdie Provinsie: jy het 'n majesteuse taak op jou skouers. Jy het so ver baie goed gedoen. Daar is nie sprake eindelik van geen energie het nie of nuwe inisiatiewe nie.

[Mr P J MARAIS: Hon Speaker, it is always with a measure of sadness that you sometimes have to say goodbye to colleagues of five years. General elections break strong ties and even friendship that had developed between people. Therefore I want to say to everyone on both sides of the House well done. You have finished the race after a term of five years. It has been a privilege that millions of people out there will never have.

I have entered this very Parliament where I now sit, for the first time in 1992 I sat here. FW de Klerk who in 1992 phoned me at home and said he wants to get me out of the President's Council, he's looking for an MEC for the Cape Province. And surprised me, but I accepted as National Party member and I was MEC for Roads and Works under Kobus Muis Meiring who then was still the Administrator. There was no Premier. He was the Administrator and there was also no Western Cape. It was a Cape Province. The Western Cape was still a young *laatie*. He was only baptised in 1994.

Then, I was also MEC in this House for Health. Thereafter, Local Government. And one of the great moments was when I had the privilege to determine the boundaries of all 30 municipalities in the Western Cape. It led, as you all know, to the ANC taking me to Court and Mandela hastily wanted to sign a law to rob me of my powers, hon Premier. I took him to Court and won the case against Mandela and afterwards he wrote me a letter:

“You are a very competent and forthright colleague.”

Friends, I retired in 2004 after I had become Premier, also Mayor of Cape Town, and I retired from active politics. And I stayed at home for 15 years until the Freedom Front asked me, come and help. And the political animal that I am, I always did it my way. I then climbed into the pit of *Afrikanerdom* and I say just as the NNP changed from inside in the President's Council, I'm also going to get you to say an Afrikaner is not a White man speaking Afrikaans. I'm going to join. And here I stand.

And I want to say to the hon Premier of this Province: you have a majestic task on your shoulders, so far you have done very well. There is nothing of not having energy or no new initiatives.]

You thought out of the box. You came with ideas and what I appreciated about this hon Premier, he is open to persuasion. He is open to adopt new methodologies. New methods of solving problems.

†Ek wil ook sê u het 'n span Ministers en Swepery aangestel wat my beindruk het, agb Premier, met hulle energie en hulle ywer wat hulle aan die dag gelê het. Ek wil u gelukwens met die keuses van jou Kabinet. Dit is geloofwaardig. Ek wil my dank aan agb lede van albei kante van hierdie Huis uitspreek, dat hulle dit goed gedink het om vir my erkenning te gee dat ek hierdie hoedjie kan opsit en sê ek is nou die Vader van die Huis. En dit was 'n eer wat my aangedoen is en ek sê vir albei, almal, ACDP, ANC, EFF, wil ek sê baie dankie dat julle my daardie eer aangedoen het.

Maar daar is ook negatiewe goed gewees. Ek het niks gehoor van interessante debatte nie. Nee. Hier het ek meer gehoor *points of order* as *points that made sense*. Ek wil die een opmerking maak.

[I also want to say you have appointed a team of Ministers and Whippery that impressed me, hon Premier, with their energy and enthusiasm that they shwed. I want to congratulate you with the choices in your Cabinet. It is praiseworthy. I want to express my thanks to hon members of both sides of

the House that you thought it well to acknowledge me that I can wear this little hat and say I'm now the Father of the House. And it has been an honour bestowed upon me and I say thank you to all, ACDP, ANC, EFF, for that honour.

But there have also been negative things. I heard nothing of interesting debates. No. Here I heard more points of order as points that made sense. I want to make the one remark.] This Government's success and the way they are being governed is dependent because they have one of the most fantastic civil servants that works for this Government in the Western Cape. I think they deserve applause. [Applause.]

†Dit was uiters frustrerend soms en hartseer om te luister na gedurige geraas, onderbrekings, wanorde, onnodige punte van ordes, minagting van die reëls en ek wil net as ek nie weer terugkom in die politiek nie, en ek hoop nie ek kom terug nie, maar as ek iets kan sê is versterk die reëls en gee aan die Speaker meer magte om hierdie mense ...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[It has been very frustrating at times and sad to listen to the continuous noise, interruptions, Dit was uiters frustrerend soms en hartseer om te luister na gedurige geraas, onderbrekings, disorder, unnecessary point of order, disrespect for the Rules and I just want to, if I don't come back to politics, and I hope I don't come back, but if I can say something it is strengthen the Rules and give the Speaker more powers to ...[Interjection.]]

An HON MEMBER: Point of ...[Interjection.]

†Mnr P J MARAIS: ...wat hierdie [Tussenwerpsels.]

[Mr P J MARAIS: ... these people [Interjections.]]

An HON MEMBER: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Order, hon members!

†Mnr P J MARAIS: ...om hulle. As hulle nie kan optree soos Sayed nie en dinge sê wat sin maak nie, dan gaan hierdie, die publiek, hulle vertroue in hierdie Huis verloor.

Vriende ...[Tussenwerpsels.]

[Mr P J MARAIS: ...around them. If they cannot act like Sayed and say things that make sense, then this, the public, is going to lose their faith in this House.

Friends ...[Interjections.]]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon member ...[Interjections.] Hon members! This is ...[Interjections.] Hon members, this is an opportunity for political parties to make their contributions to the end of this Parliamentary Term. Whether you like it or not from the contributions being made, please allow the hon members to do so in a dignified way so that we can exit this Chamber with dignity. Honourable ...[Interjection.]

Mr P J MARAIS: Hon Speaker ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Marais.

†Mnr P J MARAIS: Agb Premier, Suid-Afrika se waterkrisis gaan net vererger en daar moet planne gemaak word. Die afgelope vyf jaar as ons wil verhoed dat die Wes-Kaap nie water het nie. Dit is 'n groot uitdaging.

Agb Premier, Suid-Afrika en die Wes-Kaap staar groot ekonomiese probleme in die gesig. Die Botswana Pula gevolg deur Ghana en Marokko se geldeenhede is alreeds sterker as die Suid-Afrikaanse Rand. Ons is vierde op die lys van sterk geldeenhede. Selfs gedurende P W Botha se termyn was die Rand R3,61 op 'n dollar. Wel, dit was die slegte apartheidsregering, maar hulle het geweet hoe om die land se skepie te laat vaar. Nou onder die ANC-regering, na bevryding, is ons se Rand R19,92 per elke dollar. Ons voer goedere uit wat so duur is want die rand is nutteloos. Hy is niks werd nie. [Tussenwerpsels.]

[Mr P J MARAIS: Hon Premier, South Africa's water crisis is only going to worsen and plans will have to be made. The past five years, if we want to prevent that the Western Cape does not have water. It is a great challenge.

Hon Premier, South Africa and the Western Cape face big economic problems. The Botswana Pula followed by Ghana and Morocco's currencies are already stronger than the South African Rand. We are fourth on the list of strong

currencies. Even during P W Botha's term the Rand was R3,61 to the dollar. Well, it was the bad apartheid government, but they knew how to sail their country's ship. Now under the ANC Government, after emancipation, our Rand is R19,92 per every dollar. We export goods that are so expensive because the Rand is worthless. It's worth nothing. [Interjections.]]

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Marais, hon Marais, I have given a lot of latitude ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members! Hon members.

Mr P J MARAIS: At least they woke up now.

The SPEAKER: I have allowed ...[Interjections.] Hon members! [Interjections.] Hon members! [Interjections.] Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Order! I have allowed a lot of latitude because the intention of this segment in the proceedings is to allow reflection and a thank you and using this opportunity to exit with dignity. Hon Marais ...[Interjection.]

Mr P J MARAIS: I will ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Marais, can I please ask that you ...[Interjections.]

Mr P J MARAIS: I will.

The SPEAKER: ...that you wrap up.

Mr P J MARAIS: I will. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P J MARAIS: The people will be asked on 29 May, who do you trust. Who can rebuild this country? And I think we have a team in the coalition. There is going to be a strong team. More ideas are going to flow in. People who have different ideas, but still reaching consensus to take this province to new heights. I want to wish everybody in this House well for 29 May. I hope that most will come back and others not.

But I want to end off by saying good luck to everybody who returns. If you return, you know people judged you positively. If you do not return, you have only got yourself to blame. Thank you. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Marais. [Interjections.] Order! [Interjections.] Order! [Interjections.] Order, hon members. I recognise Al Jama-Ah. Al Jama-Ah? If not, I recognise the Democratic Alliance.

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

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

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Listening to the debate over the last two days, you could feel that there is an election coming, but you also noticed in many of the speeches, people were making speeches for the last time in this term and you could feel the emotion, you could feel that people felt the honour of what it is like to serve the citizens in this very House.

Hon Speaker, the time has come that we have got to the end of our term and we all get elected as hon members of this Provincial Parliament. Only after that, do we have different positions in the Parliament. Whether that be the hon Leader of the Opposition or an hon Minister, or an hon Chief Whip or an hon Speaker or an hon Deputy Speaker. We all start off here as hon members of this Provincial Parliament, as honourable members of this Provincial Parliament.

And it feels like just the other day that we were all standing here, hands raised, swearing allegiance to the Constitution. At that time, five years seemed like a long time, but in actual fact, it has gone in a flash. And in that flash, much has happened. We have had robust debates, we have had arguments, but we have also had areas that we have found each other because at the end of the day, we are all here for one thing: to make sure that this province and this country becomes a better place. That is why we, as public representatives, put our hands up and say, 'I am prepared to serve.'

I thought about that flash, I thought about the two years that were taken out

of those five during the pandemic. But it was at that time that it was difficult to be in this world. It was difficult to be in a Parliament where we were looked up to as the representatives of the citizens of this province and we had to play our part in helping our country and our citizens get through that pandemic. I thought about the tough times, but I also thought about the innovation. I thought about this Parliament becoming one of the first parliaments not only in this country, but in this world to go online. To set up the Ad Hoc Committees, to play our part in getting through that pandemic, in leading change and being innovative.

But of course, as the hon Sayed said, we lost two dear colleagues in this five-year period and may they rest in peace. We had changing portfolios, we had different challenges that came our way from pandemics to fires to floods, and then of course, our regular work that we have got to do. And I, for one, am really proud of this Parliament. I am really proud of what we achieve and have achieved. I think that and I cannot put it better, and in actual fact, the words of our President.

I remember standing with our President outside our National Parliament and I do not know if he really meant to say this, but he said, he said it when this Province responded through our Disaster Management Teams and our firefighters, and he stood there and he said it. He knows that things sometimes do not work in our country, but he is really happy that he is in a place where a city and a province works. And it was the President that said that. And you feel proud about this Province and the people that represent

the citizens of this province because they are all gathered here in this House.

And so, hon Speaker, I want to say to you and the hon Deputy Speaker, who lead this Parliament, thank you. I want to say to the Secretary and every single administrator that work in this Parliament, that makes me, and I am pretty certain, every single one of you so proud. Thank you.

I also want to say, as the hon Marais said, thank you to every administration individual, man, woman, that works in this Government in service of the citizens of this province. All 90 000 of those officials. We thank them as well because it is only through their work that we manage to serve our citizens. We give direction and we give oversight in this Parliament.

But hon Speaker, five years ago we swore that allegiance and here we are saying goodbye. Here we are saying thank you. It is the end of this Term of Government. And so, I also want to say to each and every hon member of this House, thank you. Thank you on behalf of the citizens for what you have done, for the time you have given, the sacrifice that you have made. The time that you have been away from your families. Every single one of you have contributed to make this Parliament as MPLs, the best Parliament in our country and I am so proud of every single one of you.

I want to say to those of you who are retiring. We have heard from the hon Deputy Speaker. There are other hon members who are retiring. I want to say to you thank you for your contribution and enjoy your retirement. I know

none of you will retire because you are all going to go onto other things and if you have served citizens in this portfolio or in this House and you have been a public servant of the citizens, you cannot go home and read books or play golf. That definitely will not happen. You will find yourself in an NGO or in some organisation.

Then, of course, there are hon members of this House that are not returning. I am not saying that you are retiring. I am saying that there are hon members that are not returning. I wish you the very best. When one door closes, another door opens. And I am sure your learnings here are going to stand you in absolute amazing stead in your next choices in life.

Those of you that have put your hand up again and are on a list to get re-elected, thank you. Thank you for saying I am going to commit again to serve the citizens of this great province and this great country. And, of course, the 29th will tell. And we make jokes in this House as to who will be sitting where after the election. The voters choose, not us. The voters will decide and after the 29th, those of us that have put our hands up and that are on those lists, those of us that are not in this House and are on the list to serve the citizens and that the citizens elect, we will see you back here perhaps.

But those of you that are re-elected, please bear in mind that we serve the citizens and if you are re-elected, I want to say now, congratulations and please take the baton forward. We need to make sure that every single term

in office, we hand over the baton and the next that come after us take it to a different level. So, thank you very much to each and every one of you. Your contributions go out and electioneer, and I hope the citizens will make the right choice. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon members, I think it would be remiss of me not to say thank you from the Chair. So, thank you very, very much for your support for the last 13 months. It feels like a lifetime. Thank you very much for the manner in which we could conduct the business of the House in the interests of the citizens. At times and at days, it felt like sheer terror. The previous Speaker often reminds me, the hon Minister of Social Development, that when the terror comes, then just stand firm.

So, thank you very, very much in the manner in which we could conduct the last 13 months. I wish you all the very best. It would be remiss of me not to single out today, hon colleagues, my staff in the Office of the Speaker. They are all sitting there. Thank you very, very much for the work that you do, for being there every day, and for serving all the hon members of this Parliament and not just a certain political party. Thank you very much for holding the line because the Office of the Speaker is non-political and that is something that we worked really hard to achieve, so I trust that we have achieved that and built that trust with all the hon members in the last 13 months.

I also want to thank all the temporary Chairpersons that relieved myself and

the hon Deputy Speaker when we were not able to Chair. Hon Maseko, hon Van der Westhuizen, hon Mvimbi, hon Bakubaku-Vos and hon Cassiem. Thank you very much for standing in for us and for continuing making sure that Parliament functions and continues to function. It has been, indeed, a great privilege to serve as the Speaker and it is something that I will cherish in my political career as probably one of the highlights. So, thank you very much for the trust that you gave when you casted your vote.

And then lastly, †maar nie die minste nie, [but not the least,] the Table staff. †Baie, baie dankie [Thank you very, very much,] and thank you very much, Secretary, for the guidance, especially when I just took the Chair and it felt like a daunting task. Thank you very, very much.

And then, hon members, for the last time: that concludes the business of the day. The Secretary will now end the meeting and all hon members will be exited from the Sitting. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 18:54.