
THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2020

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

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

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

The House met at 10:00.

The Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. The Secretary will read the First Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 1 – Premier – Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill (2020/21 Financial Year) [B4 - 2020].

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I now recognise the Premier. Hon Premier.

The PREMIER: †Molweni, †goeiedag, [good day], hon Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity, to the colleagues in the House and the colleagues online, thank you very much. Good day to you all.

Hon Speaker, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the people of the Western Cape, on our economy and on how this Government conducts its day-to-day business. This crisis has required us to respond quickly, decisively and innovatively.

The Department of the Premier has played a major role in our whole-of-government response, becoming more responsive, and leading the change across the Western Cape Government, but also across the whole province. Since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in South Africa, our first priority has been to the people of this province, whether that is ensuring that they have access to appropriate healthcare or responding to the humanitarian crisis, or ensuring that we continue to deliver Government services throughout this period.

This Province took the lockdown very, very seriously, and used the time afforded to us by the hard lockdown to prepare our systems for the peak. The DG, Dr Harry Malila and the Department of the Premier, have led the way in this regard and have continued to play an important role in overseeing our hotspot strategy to ensure that we open up more of our economy, but also doing so in a safe manner. We did not see a significant spike in infections when we did this.

As a government, hon Speaker, and as a province, our response to the crisis has been world class, taking the opportunity to learn lessons from around the world, and making use of the exceptional talent that exists in departments across the public service to chart our way forward, not only the departments in the public service, but also making sure that we work with private institutions, our universities, with the public and private sector working together in a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

Hon Speaker, we have developed innovative solutions to problems like creating the Red Dot taxi service to transport healthcare workers safely, and we have started delivering medicines to people's homes rather than having them stand in long queues. We have moved quickly to paperless hospitals and remote working across Government. This crisis has also shown us how quickly a government can respond. We have managed to build a hospital in just four weeks! We have never done this before. Hon Speaker, this crisis has shown us how a caring government is responsive, agile and innovative and has presented us with the perfect opportunity to change how we do things.

Over the past few months, this Department has led the response strategy, developed key data, contributed to the Budget Policy Committee, devised responses to the national lockdown regulations, hosted the President, assisted in allowing people to return home across borders, and led the biggest communications campaign on record in this province, amongst many, many other things.

Hon Speaker, going forward, this Department will take all of these lessons we have learnt in this crisis and develop a strategy for a government in the new normal, which we are going to be in for months to come.

The Department of the Premier has received an additional allocation of R6,350 million from the Provincial Treasury, and we have repurposed just over R72 million in funding within this Vote, R41 million of which has come from savings on compensation, achieved in part by putting on hold vacancies which are not critical to be filled at this time.

Hon Speaker, key Budget items or focus areas that we have been busy with in the last while, and I mentioned the Communications Campaign, the biggest communications campaign on record for the Western Cape; aimed at equipping residents with clear, trustworthy information that allows them to protect themselves and their families and bringing about behaviour change – something that we really have put a lot of energy into.

This campaign, costing in the region of R30 million, has been funded from repurposed funds within the Department. The campaign, implemented in two phases has included:

- Eight different radio advert campaigns run across 29 regional and community stations in all three languages in this province, recording a reach of 82% across the Western Cape.
- 10 000 street pole posters concentrated in our hotspot areas focused on

keeping our loved ones safe.

- billboards carrying adverts across this province;
- loud hailing services in our hotspot areas;
- flyers and press adverts;
- pamphlets and posters;
- taxi decals and executions inside our taxis, I should say communication executions inside our taxis;
- digital and social media content which is clear, focused and easy to access and share;
- we have developed content for businesses such as posters and floor decals which can be downloaded and printed;
- SMS and text messaging directed into hotspot areas, and many of these not only just from this Budget but also with gratitude from the private sector coming together to support us in getting these messages out from donors making sure that they help us with this messaging;
- Our First Thursdays was repurposed, using radio programmes to reach people across this province each Thursday during this lockdown with phone-in and the ability to interact with this Government;

Our key campaign messages on “stopping the spread; or staying home and staying safe; stay safe and save lives; stay safe, keep your loved ones safe.” You would have all seen them. “Keep Gogo safe or Grandma, Uncle”, making sure that the messages were personalised, so we made sure that we got people to understand that it is about each and every citizen.

We have backed up the campaign with research which has allowed us to track whether important messages are being landed and responded to accordingly.

Hon Speaker, Staying at Home during Lockdown and as much as possible in the Level 3 and 4 lockdown, is one of many of our campaigns that have encouraged people to really get behavioural change to happen in our province.

I think the wearing of masks, is the key-message change that happened during this plan. If you all remember, initially from the World Health Organisation, to even our own health specialists, saying that right upfront when you have very low infection rates, masks were not really advisable, and seeing how through engagement with specialists we changed that and now wearing of masks not only in this province but it is seen across the world as a major mechanism of slowing the spread of this virus.

Social distancing, I think something that we still have a lot of work to do within our province. We have got to make sure that we follow these rules, social distancing a big one.

Hand-washing and hygiene; Q and I facilities and making them accessible; breaking down stigmas and I think a big kudos to the team for making sure that the messaging did change that stigmatisation of this virus.

Hon Speaker, we boosted the call centre specifically with the focus to our

humanitarian response during lockdown Level 5. We repurposed R11,158 million to expand the capacity of our call centre to deal with the humanitarian relief calls, which peaked at an average of 10 000 calls per day in April, reaching over 14 000 on some days.

We implemented a contact centre solution with approximately 3000 incoming lines. When we initially started with our COVID-19 response, we only had 210 incoming lines. It meant that a lot of calls were being dropped or not getting through to us. We developed online solutions for citizens to capture their requirements for food. These call centres were then able to bolster after we managed the food security matters, bolstered our tracking and tracing, so really agile and the ability to offer the best service that was possible to the citizens of this province.

Hon Speaker, technology in the work environment and specifically changing behaviour within our Government and how we work, this Department played a big role: R6,350 million was spent to equip boardrooms like our Joint Operations Command Centre and the Expanded Cabinet Operations from 4 Dorp Street, which managed our Extended Cabinet over this Province over this period.

We have held in excess of 60 Cabinet meetings in the last four months. We held at one stage almost a meeting a day which was linked to strategy or Extended Cabinet bringing in all of our districts, our municipalities, our municipal managers and our top management in this province. These

meetings happened seven days a week. It amazed me. We were going sometimes at eleven o'clock at night. I really do take my hat off to every single official across this province, across all spheres of government that really helped us to enable the management component of this virus. I really do take my hat off to them.

DOTP has helped to ensure that Government works going ahead and making sure that we enabled our staff to work from home. This changed behaviour alone was a big adjustment. We equipped staff to work from home by rolling out MS Teams to over 10 000 staff members.

We procured bulk data and Wi-Fi routers for 500 key staff members and distributed this to various departments. We have achieved remote access solutions to ensure that staff has access to all the critical systems and applications they need to effectively do their job from home.

Hon Speaker, innovation that happened during this time did not come from a five-year plan or even a one-year plan within a department. Innovation happened because we enabled the environment. We created that environment that Government officials came up with great innovative ideas, whether it be paperless hospitals or Red Dot or apps or online Webinars, the 24/7 work that was enabled through these mechanisms enables the people working in this Government to come up with these amazing innovative ideas. It really, really did show the ability of this Government during this time.

DOTP leads in the Strategy Cluster, providing advice to the Budget Policy Committee and is not refocusing for the post-COVID-19 in the next four years of this term. Life is not going to be the same for the next four years. We have to learn from what this virus and of course our response has enabled us to do and I can assure you in the work that is going to happen over the next few weeks, looking forward at the next year and the next four years, it is going to be enabled through the absolute innovation that has happened just in the last four and a half months.

This Department is playing a significant role in monitoring the COVID-19 hotspots in the province with their data collection being synthesised into a weekly report for Cabinet. We are data-driven and an evidence-led Government and we report this also weekly through to the National PCC making sure that we are playing our part in South Africa in what we do and achieve in this province.

Hon Speaker, the Lockdown Regulations resulted in many questions from members of the public and our legal services team published Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as guidance for Government and the public and advised on the interpretation of the Disaster Management Act Regulations and Directions. Much work in this space happened in the last four and a half months. I really thank the legal team and all of those within DOTP who enabled this, and alongside other departments. They have also advised the Provincial Executive on many areas, including opposing directions that would have banned school feeding and preparing food like soup kitchens, etcetera,

and hot food in this province. I thank them for that advice and I thank the team for standing strong despite lots of pressure and of course, as was said by Minister Maynier yesterday in his closing remarks, history will note what happened and came out of this province with regard to feeding, but I do want to say – and I spoke earlier of the next four years of this term of this Parliament – that nutrition and hunger and poverty are something that we are going to have to have a major focus on, not just seeing what has happened in the last few months, but definitely going forward into the years ahead.

Hon Speaker, the Centre for e-Innovation has installed all the IT at our field hospitals, at Brackengate, the CTICC and at Khayelitsha. Not only are these systems geared to provide a paperless environment, but they also allow for patients to connect to their families via Wi-Fi at the hospitals as they are not allowed visitors. Hon Speaker, I was present on a Saturday seeing this team working in Khayelitsha, building these ICT and tech systems that have not only changed those field hospitals, but have definitely innovated and changed the way that the health system will be responding in future and the way that our hospitals operate into the future.

Hon Speaker, DOTP's Internal Audit will be providing assurance on the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of COVID-19 Supply Chain Management (SCM) transactions, and I am really glad to see the Minister of Finance now making all of our PPE procurement processes and those involved in doing business with Government, public and open, and that really is a good move in transparency and showing how a transparent responsible

government operates.

Hon Speaker, the people management team has developed policies and guidelines for staff in response to this pandemic, allowing us to continue working but at the same time ensuring that we are able to keep our people safe. We have been liaising with the National Government Departments regarding vulnerable groups and have been assisting with conflict resolution and mediation.

Hon Speaker, our International Relations Team played a strong role in repatriating our citizens as well as helping foreign nationals in South Africa during lockdown to go home to their homes in their home countries.

Hon Speaker, the Secretariat Services and the protocol teams have supported all of our Cabinet meetings and ensured a successful visit by the President. The team has also been working with Faith-Based Organisations to develop protocols on bereavements and funerals. Minister Marais has announced that every Wednesday she has asked that we please observe a moment of silence. I think in Cape Town it is very easy because the noon-day gun reminds us on a Wednesday when that starts, but across this province that we take a moment to think about those who have lost their lives in this time, but at the same time also to think about those on the frontline, to think about those fighting for their lives, to think about those sacrificing to make sure that we all get through this pandemic.

Hon Speaker, we have also worked closely with other provinces developing protocols with the Eastern Cape on funerals and worker migration and movement. We have worked on disposal management and protocols. We have worked on mortuary and death management. We have shared that with the PCC. We have shared that with sister provinces. All of that work does not go unnoticed.

Hon Speaker, the Department strategy team, responsible for Organisational Health and Safety (OHS), procurement of masks for staff, thermometers for various buildings with our processes of making sure that people enter and exit our buildings safely. It is all managed through those DOTP staff that are responsible for these regulatory frameworks and the compliance officers are appointed across this province. I thank them all for the work that they are involved in, making sure that we keep our spaces safe.

Hon Speaker, the Department of the Premier team and all of the staff across the Western Cape Government have shown us what it means to be a public servant. I want to thank them all for the work that they have done under very difficult circumstances over the past few months. I would like to thank the Director-General, Harry Malila, for his hard work and steady leadership, and the members of my Cabinet for their advice and their input and their leadership which has helped us steer our response. For the top management and every single Government official in this province who have gone above and beyond, I really thank them. I would like to dedicate this speech, hon Speaker, to the frontline staffers across this province, to those amazing

health workers, to the teachers, to the donors and the NGOs who have helped with our social workers and our humanitarian response. To every single person who has gone to work every day in the service of the people of this province, despite great risk to themselves, I dedicate this speech to every single citizen who is playing their part in wearing their masks, in social distancing, and making sure that we continue to flatten the curve in the interests of the people of this province. I thank you.

Ms L J BOTHA: Hear-hear! [Pause.]

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): I think you are on mute, hon Speaker.

Mr P J MARAIS: I thought it is a minute of silence.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hon Speaker, you are on mute.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: I only see body language.

Mr P J MARAIS: No, the interpreter is not here.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hon Speaker...

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker, your channel seems to be on mute.

The Teams Channel is on mute. [Pause.] We still cannot hear anything.

The SPEAKER: Everything is activated, but nothing is working.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): We have got you now, thank you.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: We can hear you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, ja, thank you, hon members, everything was activated. It just refused to work, so I do not know what the glitch was about, but thank you, hon members, for your patience. I now recognise the hon, the Leader of the Opposition.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I would like to join the Premier in saluting every single public servant in the Western Cape for their role during the lockdown and for the sacrifices that they have made. I would also like this House to in particular be with in their thoughts and prayers with the family of Deputy Cape Town Traffic Chief, Paul Oliver, who passed away this morning due to COVID-related illness. This is once again an example of the frontline staff, our teachers of which we have lost 21, our health workers and others who have paid the ultimate price in terms of their efforts to combat the pandemic.

I think it is important that when we reflect on this Vote which involves an additional R6,3 million, that we also analyse very critically and avoid trying to paper over some serious challenges which we have actually faced

in regard to the pandemic. I think when the Premier talks about the impact that the leadership of the Department of the Premier has had on the entire province, I think it would be wrong not to highlight very specifically that the City of Cape Town in this process has literally proved that they are a law unto themselves. We have seen the Metro Police, actually acting... [Interjection.]

Mr R D MACKENZIE: You are in the wrong Budget Vote.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hon Speaker, I thought we had a clear position that there should not be interjections.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members. I would like to draw your attention, hon member Mackenzie, you are in front of me here in the Chamber. I want to draw your attention to the agreed principle in this House. There was a ruling on the 23rd of April and the House agreed that we are not going to do the heckling, and I would like to request that we do not for the purpose of the functionality of the system. Thank you very much, hon, the Leader of the Opposition. You may proceed. Thank you, hon members, for your indulgence.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: We know that the Department of the Premier during the pandemic has had responsibility for coordination but we have had a major crisis where it has appeared very clearly that the Premier and the Department have been unable to ensure

that other spheres of government actually work in a cooperative way. The shame of Strandfontein remains there and the disappointment is that there has been no direct attempt to actually engage the City in terms of their chosen course of action. I think also as we went into this pandemic, issues of any inequality, poverty and landlessness were there and the fact that the Province and the City and most municipalities do not have housing and human settlement master plans have shown up in what we have experienced over the last couple of weeks. We as the ANC say no to unlawful invasions as we also say no to unlawful evictions of people which we have seen happening in the City of Cape Town, but the problem that we are facing, and this is where leadership is required at this time, is that the issue of landlessness requires clear and strategic leadership, which has been failing.

When we look at this particular Budget, the Budget Book on page 38 reflects that an amount of R9,4 million was received as a donation and we have also heard that over R30 million went into the marketing campaign, but what we have not been told and possibly the Premier will share with us, is that in regard to those particular service providers... [Interjection.]

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker... [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...who donated those amounts of money... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon, the Leader of the Opposition, will you please take your seat. Chief Whip, what is the point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): I would like to know if the hon member will take a question.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Chief Whip. Hon Dugmore, are you able to take a question?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: She can submit the question in writing to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition will reply in writing, will respond in writing, but I now see that I have got until 10:36 given the interruptions which have been made, so it is one thing to reflect in the Budget Book that R9,4 million... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon, the Leader of the Opposition. We will still manage the time this side. It is managed from the Presiding Officer's side.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes, but the Chief Whip is welcome to submit her question... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: But you may proceed.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: She is welcome to submit her questions in writing. It is absolutely fine.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Sir.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: So what we have asked in the Committee is to actually break down the R30 million that was spent on marketing and actually indicate which of those service providers that are in the book appearing as having donated money actually received money for marketing, because I think in a sense this donation then actually misleads the House given especially if we have paid those particular service providers for media services so we need a response to that.

I think the Premier has indicated that R11 158 000 was made available for the contact centre. Now anyone who tried to phone in regard to the food parcels in the first three, four weeks after that announcement was made, experienced huge amounts of frustration, phone calls not being answered, being promised that they would be phoned back, and yet MEC Fernandez tried to give the impression that this was a call centre that was actually responding to the needs. Clearly that was a failure and the lack of planning in regard to making sure that the call centre was able to deal with the number of calls, was clearly a failure which caused massive amounts of frustration during this particular lockdown. I think what we need to know is how many of those had actually called into the centre requesting food parcels; how many of those specifically who called were actually assisted.

We have asked, hon Speaker, for a detailed breakdown of the boardrooms which were supplied from the R5 million allocated to them. We have heard of three boardrooms, but we have not heard any detail as to how exactly that R5 million was spent and that is a major concern.

One of the issues which remains unanswered, we appreciate the fact that field hospitals were built in a short space of time and we salute all of those involved, but one of the issues which still has not been clarified was the fact that the evidence that we heard in the Committee was that there is a so-called click-in, kick-in clause where an amount of R12,8 million per month would be paid to the Convention Centre, but no-one has been able to tell us when that kick-in clause actually applies and from what point in time the Provincial Government will be paying that R12,8 million.

That is in addition, obviously, to all the other service fees which are being paid to the Convention Centre, so possibly the Premier can tell us directly today when does the kick-in clause take into effect for the R12,8 million rental and this ties into our point about the inability to engage with the City of Cape Town, who essentially have not allowed a single public hall to be used saying that those would be used for quarantine facilities but we all know that every single one of those halls is standing empty.

We had other municipalities where the ANC in Witzenberg motivated and we managed to ensure that the Ceres Town Hall was actually used for homeless people, but here we have a situation of expenditure being made

whereas public facilities across the City of Cape Town where churches and other organisations had volunteered to help in regard to the homeless were never made available, and that is a concern. So, what I think we need to establish is that this pandemic is not over. There has been a huge amount of work.

We need to make sure that we continue serving particularly those communities mostly affected by inequality, by poverty, and it is in that regard that the ongoing conduct of the City of Cape Town is having a negative impact on actually being able to care for our people and this is something that needs to be addressed. The Premier eventually agreed and we welcome that, to meet with political party leaders, but in other municipalities run by the DA we are not seeing the calling in of Opposition parties to jointly look at ways of strengthening a united response to this pandemic.

The other issue which we have raised, and we are hoping that the Premier will provide that information is our Provincial Constitutional as well as the National Constitution... [Inaudible – audio distorted.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon, the Leader of the Opposition. You now need to finish your speech, your time is up.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: I thank you. [Time expired.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you very much. Hon members, I now recognise hon member Mackenzie. He is here in the Chamber. Hon member Mackenzie.

Mr R D MACKENZIE: Thank you, hon Speaker, and thank you to the hon Premier and hon member Dugmore for that input. It is clear that the Department of the Premier and the Premier have led us through this pandemic that members had to resort to going to municipalities to find something to criticise the Premier about because there is nothing in his Department and his handling of this pandemic that they can criticise him about.

Hon Speaker, today we are participating in the debate on Budget Vote 1 as the Adjusted Budget to beat COVID-19 in the Western Cape. We are debating during unprecedented times and against the backdrop of declining revenue and national economy that is in tatters due to maladministration, mass-corruption and the abuse of public funds by the ANC of which hon member Dugmore is a member of.

This economic catastrophe directly impacts on the Budget, on the Western Cape as well as the Department of the Premier, as the institution responsible for innovation, collaboration in order to improve service delivery for its citizens. This Budget will allow us to make good of this vision.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the Premier of the Western Cape back and I am happy that he is feeling much better and recovered from the dreaded coronavirus. I am confident that he will continue to lead his Department in the Western Cape through these trying times.

Following the Order of the Day, I express my support towards the Special Adjustment Budget 2020/21 for the Department of the Premier. I can concur that this is indeed an evidence-based and data-led budget that meets the needs of this time even if the Provincial Treasury had to accommodate some of the decreases in the overall Budget. This is purely the result – what we see in the reduction of the Budget for the Western Cape – are years of poor financial responsibility by the ANC, which this Department also had to adjust on.

The R30 million licence for the ICT licence is just one allocation that has been done to stem the negative effect of the ANC mismanagement of the country due to the rand/dollar exchange rate. If you had policy certainty, a competent Government, National Government, the impact of COVID-19 and the impact on the rand/dollar exchange rate might not have been so severe.

Hon Speaker, communication is the key to success. The Stop the Panic Campaign led by the Department of the Premier has indeed been the most comprehensive communication strategy in the history of this Government. Stop the Spread under the leadership of the Department has surely become

the new golden words of this Government. I wish to thank the Premier and the team at the Department for the proactive manner in which they have dealt with communication during COVID-19.

Contrast this to other provinces and to other Departments of the Premier, there has been little or no communication at all. The upwards reprioritisation of the R30 million under paragraph 5 has certainly gone a long way in ensuring people remain informed and are able to take responsible measures.

As we go about our daily duties, these billboards, the posters on the street and the radio stations' discussions are much needed reminders that what we did are not yet done in the fight against this pandemic. I also want to thank the many sponsors and donors like Vodacom, Independent Outdoor Media, Tractor Outdoor, Ads24, Media Mark and various radio stations in this beautiful province that came on board during this pandemic.

Hon Speaker, the joint operation centre is one of the most effective ways in which to handle any situation. It allows coordination among many spheres of government and avails the most up-to-date technology for officials to work remotely. For a pandemic that can only be stopped or slowed by social distancing, investing in technology is the most important thing. For this purpose, and it is with great applause that we welcome this innovative Government that has technology at the top of its agenda, and we therefore welcome the R1,3 million towards the IT Refresh for this job.

Through this pandemic we have seen committed staff in the Western Cape and the work undertaken to support those in need. It is only through further effective communication and behaviour change that we continue to stop the spread. The Department has consistently shown why it is one of the most innovative in the country. It was therefore no surprise that they earmarked on the R11 million expansion for the contact centre and customer relation management. You see, hon Speaker, in the Western Cape residents are our customers and not voters where we should steal from like other provinces, so when you have a Contact and Customer Relationship Centre where residents can contact in, it speaks wonders of this great Government and Department of the Premier that we have.

Hon Speaker, whilst the DA delivers a budget to beat COVID-19 in the Western Cape, Pretoria uses the crisis to line the pockets of the cadres and comrades. Regarding the baseline reductions from other programmes we are mindful of the fact that this is the direct result of COVID-19. However, I would fail in my duty if I do not mention the fact that the President was here a few weeks ago at the Cape Town International Convention Centre where he waxed lyrically and I quote, “money is not a problem.”

Yet, the Western Cape had to make many Budget adjustments, including this Department’s and baselines many of my colleagues will speak to later today.

This is alarming, especially when the ANC cadres could not keep their hands of PPE, including the President's own spokesperson and her husband whose hands are all over PPE tenders in other provinces, where she is also a PEC member, of which hon member Dugmore is a member – a paid-up member. The Union Buildings under the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa have now become a crime scene for all the ANC members. The lockdown hit everyone with different kinds of hardships and many aspects of life were subject to the lack. Despite the fact that the Premier in the Western Cape Government spent millions on economic and poverty relief they have not forgotten our animals. Animals are companions for many people during this lockdown, including myself as lover of dogs. I then welcome the R100 000 that was given to the SPCA which will be used in many of our disadvantaged communities dealing with the stress, and showcase the caring attitude of this Western Cape Government.

I wish to thank the thousands of Western Cape staff who continue to work hard and find new innovative ways to ensure that services are rendered to our customers. I encourage communities to continue to practice social distance, sanitise their hands, wear masks, sneeze in a crooked arm, and adhere to all safety regulations. The simple tasks are priceless in our continued fight against COVID-19.

I wish to extend my sincere condolences to the staff who have lost family members and those that have been affected by COVID-19 and recovering at home during this difficult time. There are those who have been hit the

hardest and we need to ensure that they recover safely and continue to come back and work for the Western Cape Government and our customers. We look forward to monitoring the implementation of this Budget, to ensure that every resident of this province has a secure future, a future built on safety, hope and opportunity.

To the heroes of this pandemic, all our frontline staff, who continually get up every day and night to make the Provincial Government abundantly the best in the country.

I thank you and I salute you. The DA and the Standing Committee fully support this Budget. I thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Mackenzie.

Ms L J BOTHA: Hear-hear!

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members, I now recognise hon member Xego.

Mr M XEGO: Thank you, hon Speaker, and I welcome the presentation by the Premier. I think the Premier has learnt a lot from his inspiration in Gauteng, the Premier there, David Makhura, who with his Government has prepared for the afterlife of the people of Gauteng by digging graves whilst they are still alive, and we note as the EFF that the DA in the Western Cape has taken the same cue of preparing for our people in the

Tygerberg Hospital when they are dead in an institution, preparing the institution where it can host up to the significant number of 600 people who are dead. So which means that the aim here is that people should die and there is no plan to prevent that, but fast forward.

In principle the Department of the Premier should play a very strategic role in being true to its vision of assuming a leadership role to enable the Western Cape Government to improve the quality of life of all its people, with a mission and a vision of providing good governance and to enable integrated service delivery.

However, under the leadership of the Premier, this Province has the opposite of this whole truth. The marginalisation of black communities and the lack of addressing their housing needs, backlog in township infrastructure development, social justice, unemployment, poverty, remained intact and ever-increasing. Despite being allocated a Budget increase adjustment of over R6,3 million, the Department of the Premier is still failing to address a comprehensive and integrated economic recovery plan for the province, especially regarding assistance of small SMMEs and the informal trading sector. The small businesses and informal traders in townships and elsewhere remain neglected and without any form of assistance and this Government is doing nothing to remove bureaucratic [Inaudible.] [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Xego, thank you very much sir, your time is

up.

Mr M XEGO: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon members, I now recognise hon Herron.

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, people cannot eat IT, boardrooms and innovation, so I think that we have a tendency in the Department of the Premier to be overly fascinated with technology at the expense of other essential services. We see that an allocation of R5 million for boardrooms is included in the Adjustment Budget and an allocation that is earmarked for humanitarian relief of R11 million is actually going to a contact centre and customer relationship management. So I think that this is actually literally taking money out of people's mouths or food out of people's mouths and placing it in bells and whistles, IT systems and contact management systems at a time when we need to be prioritising real humanitarian relief, which is food and sustenance for people who are rendered destitute by a loss of income and the lockdown. I think we should acknowledge, hon Speaker, the R9 million that we have received from donations... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Herron. Your time is up.

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you. [Time expired.]

The SPEAKER: It was a one minute. Thank you, sir. I now recognise hon member Christians, hon members.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Speaker. The ACDP supports this Budget. I am also pleased that the Premier mentioned something drastic must be done in the remaining four years of his term by addressing nutrition, hunger and poverty. I think we all saw now the numbers that the Premier has quoted of the numerous volumes of calls that were received by the call centre and the expansion of the call centre telling you that there is a dire need; that people are hungry, and hon Speaker, the R11,5 million that was expended to expand this capacity, it is disappointing to see that only R50 million was to address the hunger of our people, and maybe something else can be done in future and as I said yesterday, I am saying it again, food parcels are not the solution. We as a government, and the Premier, will have to look broader how to get people employed and how can they see to themselves.

Hon Speaker, also another point that I want to make, the posters were small little posters on the poles, I think it was A1s and not A4s. I do not think 15 000 posters made a big impact... [Audio distorted.] [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Christians, thank you very much. Your time is up, thank you.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Speaker. [Time expired.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, I now recognise hon member Marais.

Mr P J MARAIS: Thank you so much, hon Speaker. I will speak fast. Premier, yes, you have put in a lot of effort, but I think your plans were designed for Bishopscourt, not Bishop Lavis. I will tell you why. While technically you are well on cue with what you are doing, social distancing, how can people stay apart from each other in matchbox houses and squatter camps? Sufficient clean water – people do not even have water. Tell the City of Cape Town to get down and reduce the water tariffs. What about PPEs? Mr Premier, the poor are like a batsman in cricket with a broomstick trying to protect their wickets against fast-bowler COVID-19, their wickets flying every day. Especially in the poor areas, they get bowled out and that is why we are preparing mass graves for them. Give them a proper bat to defend themselves.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Marais, you spoke very fast. Your time is up, sir. [Laughter.] Thank you. Hon members, I now recognise hon member Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Under these pandemic circumstances the Al Jama-ah wants to welcome the Division of the Premier to focus on feeding and in breaking poverty. Al Jama-ah therefore wants to encourage the Premier to take this initiative to each and every ward in the Western Cape Province and not to so-called hotspots. There are enough churches, mosques and schools in each ward to feed the

people. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Brinkhuis. Thank you very much. Hon members, I now recognise the hon, the Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker, and thank you very much to the hon members who have taken part in this debate. First of all, thank you to the hon member Dugmore, I do note that he did sort of echo the thanks to the officials across the province and thank you for that. Then of course he moved off to the land debate and of course this is a Budget debate and not a land debate and specifically with the focus on the City of Cape Town and not on the Province. I really look forward to engaging him in a land debate and specifically about the different support from different spheres of government, but primarily at the moment on the illegal land grabs that are taking place and noting that this Province is definitely punished when it comes to the allocation of public order police.

We have way fewer public order police allocated to this Province than any of the other provinces in South Africa and I wonder what the political motive is behind that. How much political motivation is there in the illegal land occupation and we really need to drill into this and whether he is able to deal with any of the complaints that are laid at his door, about his own political party engaging in illegal activity especially about land occupation in this province, and absolutely, we say that evictions of people are not possible or allowed under the lockdown, but that is evictions of people

living on properties or living in accommodation that they are perhaps paying rent or etcetera, that cannot happen, but of course the legal orchestrated land invasions are absolutely illegal and need to be dealt with because that will bring not only municipalities in this province to their knees but across South Africa, and we see mixed messages when it comes to this.

With regard to his questions about donations specifically, what I will do is make sure that we give you a clear printout that links all of the donations that we have received and Provincial Treasury have put in very strict donations policies and then as you know Minister Maynier will be publishing now on our website a list of our procurement of the items that we have purchased as well as the cost per item and which companies have provided these, and of course this is a further lens on allowing political parties but also the public to have a look at what we have spent money on and raise questions if there are questions to be raised on specific companies or individuals linked to those companies, so that we make sure that we root out corruption.

It is a massive problem in South Africa and I think if we have to look at the stark difference between this province and ANC run provinces you will see in procurement a direct stark difference between this province and our real commitment to making sure that we are clean, that we remove any space of political involvement in procurement and of course if we do and of course we cannot guarantee that it is a 100% fool proof, but these kinds

of innovations with us making it absolutely public will be a tool that will enable us that if there is anything untoward that we can deal with it decisively.

I notice his comments about the call centre and you know, we did learn as we went along in this pandemic. We also did not have absolute capacity on day one whether it be healthcare capacity or in this context in his question, call centre capacity, and we say it openly, we did not have the capacity. We had to build it, but you cannot just go from 200 lines to 3000 lines in a matter of a day, you have to go through processes, number one, you have got to find ways in which we could increase that capacity and then you have also got to log the backlog and then eat away at the backlog.

I can assure you that we watch that very closely and when we got the extra lines in place we brought that backlog down in a matter of days so that we actually were able to respond to calls, but we said it openly to the public, please be patient with us and so I notice he raises these issues and I mean there is nothing to hide. We built the capacity and then that capacity was able to deal with what was coming at us; just the same way as we built the healthcare capacity and our health response to this pandemic.

On the question of the CTICC, I just wanted to see if I have that exact clause yet – no, I have not got the answer back as yet but I will get to that answer on when that kick-in clause happens. We are having that discussion

at the moment in our Cabinet. As I think everyone knows our health response has really been a response that we said from the beginning we will be conservative, we will over-cater and as we know right now our public hospitals have a capacity or are filled to 71% at the moment so we do have spare capacity. Our ICUs in the public space in the past two weeks have averaged an 80% capacity and so we will now also be having further discussions on the length of time that we need these field hospitals, can we then perhaps close one or two and that decision will be made over the next while.

Just as we made our decisions with regards to expanding the CTICC, if you remember, we even had a process where the national model was showing us and our own models were showing us that in actual fact perhaps we should actually prepare more. Our peak might be higher and at that stage we actually went and did all of the work to prepare ourselves right up until pushing the go-ahead button on the CTICC 2, but our modelling then said to us we could hold back, so it is all in preparation, it is all ready but we have not had to utilise it and we will also look at when we can start diminishing some of this capacity. But of course the free access to the CTICC that they gave us rent free in agreement with the CTICC, the Province, and the City, that cannot be there forever, and we understand they have also got a business to run. They have also got people who work for them, so that is why these kick-in clauses are there, but I will get him the exact detail on when that happens, and obviously we will try to save money where possible and if we can then change our focus making sure

that we are prepared for a second wave, should that come, that we have got enough capacity but not over-spending on that capacity.

Your point about the halls, initially the National Public Works Department sent out a directive that said all open public spaces like halls, etcetera, need to be made available for the COVID-19 response. If you remember in the beginning we were even going to make field hospitals in tents rather than using these fixed infrastructures because we were going to use them, should we need to, for other purposes. Of course, it is not really the halls that are necessary for the homeless. The homeless were dealt with and are still dealt with in this Government and when we get to the debate on Social Development you will hear the numbers, but over R20 million is put into health shelters across this province. We monitor that capacity regularly. Minister Fernandez is onto it and she also engages with other municipalities on the homeless and on the homeless spaces ongoing.

Your last point about the district model, I can assure you that if you look at how the district model has been managed within this province with our extended Cabinet, with every single municipal manager and Mayor in our districts as well as the City of Cape Town, and the various Mayco members included in the extended Cabinet, both Government officials as well as the political leadership and including other National Departments, this extended Cabinet has been a model in South Africa.

I am not sure whether this kind of model happens in the so-called district

models across other provinces. We will see when the court case comes up, because I know that we have been providing documentation for the courts, because a query has gone in onto whether the National Command Council is running minutes, and what kind of reporting, and what I do know is there is only one province that reports on a weekly basis, whether it be our hotspot strategy across this province, or whether it be every single Cabinet meeting that we have had from day one, even before the declaration of a disaster in this country, and even before the Command Council was set up at a national level, this province has put together minutes of every single one of those Extended Cabinet meetings, and management meetings; has sent them to the national level, via the PCC, and we will see when it comes to running of the district model, who actually runs it properly and responsibly.

The point that you are also getting at is the deployment of National Ministers. I wrote again yesterday to the President, I have had a discussion with him, but we still do not have clear understanding of the constitutional mandate of a National Minister coming to a province to talk about COVID-19, as opposed to his or her portfolio.

We know that certain Ministers at a national level are not even managing their portfolios properly, and now they want to come and manage provinces and manage districts across this country with COVID-19. I think this Province has shown and history will also show, the kind of management. We have made mistakes along the way, but I promise you that when it comes to a province, managing this COVID-19, this Province and the team in this

Province, across all spheres of government, have been absolutely world-class, and history will show that, compared to what is happening I think in other parts of the world, and in our country.

Hon member Mackenzie, thank you very much for your role as Chair of the Committee. Thank you very much for your speech. I think evidently you were showing also what happens in other provinces around PPE and corruption, and what we are doing in our province, making this absolutely open and transparent.

One cannot help the feeling that when this happens, and we are awake at 2 o'clock in the morning concerned about the people in this province, when you think that perhaps leadership in other provinces are perhaps awake at 2 o'clock in the morning, wondering how they can get another contract, or how they can get another tender, and I sometimes look at that, and that is really shocking. We should be all focused on the interests of the people of our provinces, or the people of South Africa.

Thank you for commenting on the SPCA help that we put out there. Of course it is a small amount, but we also commend other departments and the private sector for helping across the board. Food security for humans, but also for the animals in our province. We need to show that we care.

Also your comments around the future and the kind of work that we have got to be focusing on now, we put a lot of effort into the health response and into

COVID-19 in this province, and I mentioned it as world class, and I stand by that.

We now have to use those learnings once again in dealing with pandemic number 2. Pandemic number 2 is hunger, starvation, poverty, because now what is happening are the implications of this extended lockdown of some of the crazy regulations that do not make sense, that we have learnt from, even our own science and our officials that we appoint at national level and at provincial level need to listen to the science, we must be data-led and evidence-led. Of course when we do not listen to it, that is when we have some of these crazy regulations that come out, we do not monitor and test them, and that is why we are now seeing this second pandemic staring at us. It is a major, major problem, and of course that is what we will all be swinging our focus to in this Government over the next weeks.

Hon member Xego, thank you very much for your part in this debate. I do note that you talk about the Province and Gauteng, and you talk about graves, or perhaps the preparedness on dealing with death. When you prepare, as a health response, for all that is going to happen when a COVID-19 pandemic hits you as a region, a province, a city, or a country, you have to learn from other countries.

As I said in yesterday's digicom and in the part of my speech, I remember four and a half months ago saying that we need to make sure that we get our response right, and I promise you the Health Department is leading, and the

whole of Government stepped up to that world class response.

That meant that we cannot have people lying in passageways in our hospitals, or in vehicles in our parking lots, or as we have seen, in ambulances in other provinces, riding from hospital to hospital to try and find a bed. We do not want to have that in our province, and our response has shown that we did not have it. We have excess capacity, we over-prepared.

The preparation was not only for beds for the people of our province. It was not only for PPE to protect our frontline staff. It was not only making sure that we had sufficient oxygen to make sure that the people of our province had their best chance at surviving this virus. It was not only making sure that our response and movement to new drugs, or enabling new drugs to be used, or new oxygen use mechanisms in our healthcare facilities, or enabling in toto our health response to bring down those projected deaths within our pandemic.

Remember they projected in excess of 6,000 deaths and then 10,000 deaths. You need to prepare hospital beds, but you also need to prepare for those lives that we did not manage to save, and I did not want to have coffins and bodies piling up, and of course there too we prepared, as a responsible government prepares. The facility you speak about at Tygerberg at the moment, we definitely made sure that we were prepared, but over-prepared, and right now that facility has the capability of 624 bodies, and only nine at present taking up that space.

Can you imagine what you would have been saying in this debate if we had 159 bodies waiting in piles somewhere? We had to prepare from one aspect, or one part of the spectrum, right across to the other and it shows you that we take this very, very seriously. We really do respect life and we care about life in this province, and that is why we will be focusing now on the future, on our recovery plan, on the economic recovery plan. We do raise issues on the economic side, and we have helped thousands of businesses in this province, but I will leave that to the economic debate.

To hon member Herron, thank you very much for your contribution, but understanding that you now try to use this Department as the department that needs to roll out the food security.

We definitely had a role to play. From management to enabling through a call centre that our food system works. The big money happens in other departments, not in this Department, and so it is not really helpful when you start to talk about how much money we spend on enabling the humanitarian response. That is all part of management, and so too are enabling our board rooms.

We were not prepared for e-Meetings and making sure that Government can operate safely. We were not prepared for these Cabinet Ministers visiting us, where we were going to have Cabinet meetings with more and more people in them, in a safe way. We had to make sure that we procured the correct IT to ensure that we could respond from a management point of view, and again I

say a world class response from the management of the administration in this Government.

I also noticed hon member Christians, thank you very much for your contribution, and again this is not the budget for food security, it is from a management point of view, and of course coordination. The real food security came from the Department of Local Government, as well as the leadership, coordination, and funding from our DSD Department, and led by Minister Fernandez, and she will speak on it in her Budget Vote. But quite frankly, the real response comes from those donors, those NGO's, those people who day and night are out there making sure that they are helping that food security is managed through this pandemic.

I will say that our next focus - and you all would have seen the response document that was tabled with us from the EDP, and of course that helps us frame our response - over the next few weeks will be to look at what the response will be of this Government around food security for the next few years.

I also must recognise the Department of Agriculture, who will obviously talk in this debate coming on over the next few days, their response, and looking at the number of food gardens, inner-city and in rural municipalities, thousands of them in the last two months that have been put in place across this province. Every single department in the whole of Government response, has played a role.

Then to the hon member Marais, Bishops court versus Bishop Lavis. It would be very interesting, hon member Marais, for me to give you a GIS map of how the R5,5 billion is spent in response so far for COVID-19, of which we are debating in these budgets, R3 billion of that. I can assure you, you will see it is not spent in Bishops court. It is spent in our hotspots, it is spent on the focuses of areas specifically with people without. You will note that the bulk of that spending is in the City of Cape Town where most people live, and it is focused specifically on poorer people, on enabling them to make sure that we all get through this virus. That GIS map will show that.

You speak about water tanks and water availability. Thousands of tanks rolled out across this province. PPE, millions and millions of Rands spent on PPE, not only for our frontline services, but also from Government, as well as the private sector coming together to put PPE in the hands of people that need it most, and we will continue to do that.

Hon member Brinkhuis, thank you very much for your contribution. Also talking and focusing on food, and that is the right area to be focusing on. I think in the future we are going to have to be much more focused on hunger and nutrition, or poverty alleviation around food, and nutrition, the economic recovery, as well as safety, and bringing those all together to make sure that we deal with pandemic number 2.

We have to have the same kind of energy and focus because joblessness, hunger, and poverty are going to be what governments are going to be

focused on, the whole of society over the next while. It is going to be applying our minds, and I think we have this learning from COVID-19 and seeing how we have managed it as a government, has been exemplary.

Once again I want to note that I dedicated this speech to every single person in this province who have been playing their part, who have been going above and beyond to make sure that we have flattened the curve. I implore you to continue to do so. We need to make sure that we keep this curve flattening, reducing this risk so that we can then also at the same time reduce the risk of that pandemic biting the citizens of this province too hard. I thank you very much.

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

The Secretary will now read the Second Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 6 – Health – Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill (2020/21 Financial Year) [B4 - 2020].

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Hindley. Now, hon members, I recognise the Minister of Health, hon member Mbombo.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you, hon Speaker, I am not sure whether there are any Department officials here, but if they are here in the House, I

also want to recognise them. Hon Speaker?

The SPEAKER: They are not here, hon Minister, but perhaps they are listening and watching you.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Okay. Hon Premier, the hon members, the people of the Western Cape, †molweni [greetings.] good morning.

Yesterday I spoke about how history will judge us, and I still maintain that history will judge us on how we responded to this Covid pandemic, and history will judge us on how we spent the taxpayers' money to fight COVID-19 pandemic.

Today I present to this House the Special Adjustment Budget for the Department of Health in the Province, in order to defeat COVID-19.

Hon Speaker, we have been the only province that initiated a Provincial Parliament Covid Ad-hoc Committee, and also we have been the only province where you will find that even other committees have been active. It means that this House and the hon members know everything the Department has done to fight COVID-19.

We presented to the Ad Hoc Committee and Health Committee, including the National Assembly Committee, the NCOP Committee, just as we presented to [Inaudible.] structures and councillors all over the province.

This is the Department that the whole country and the whole world's spotlight have shone over, above any other. We journeyed with you from our first [Inaudible – audio distorted.] where we shared the Western Cape preparedness and readiness.

We took you through the first strategy when we are responding to imported cases and also those associated with the imported cases. We took you into our confidence, into our response to trust us through the sparks and the flames. We took you through a journey together, where we shared our hotspot response, when the flames turned into bushfires in our local community transmission.

We presented to the National Joint Command chaired by the President. We engaged with academics throughout in search of a scientific response to the virus. Hon Speaker, remember, history will judge us.

First things first. I just want to thank all healthcare workers for their sacrifice and putting their lives in danger while saving the lives of others. Our heroes, and the sheroes, the alpha and the omega in the fight against COVID-19 in South Africa, despite the fact that it is still an unknown and scary virus.

While some public servants were downing their tools, the healthcare workers did indeed show they fight when others cannot anymore. Thank you very much.

I also want to pay tribute to those who lost their lives due to this virus. As of today, we have 37 that left us. They comprised all categories from clinicians, non-clinicians, administrative, and other support staff. †Umzamo omhle bawuzamile, ugqhatso balufezile anga uThixo angabopha amanxeba ezizalwana, nezalamani zabo abanike uphumla olunoxolo. [They ran a good race. May God heal the wounds of their relatives and friends and may they rest in peace.]

Currently we have 4,736 staff recovered and 513 active cases. Also, I do not want to leave behind the unions, to make sure that we create an environment that is responsive to occupational and healthy safety measures in our health facilities.

Now going to the Budget. I want to thank Dr Keith Cloete as the HOD, and also his senior management team, for the role they played in finalising this Budget. Hon Speaker, note we are discussing the Budget retrospectively, as we have already implemented some of this response to COVID-19. It feels like when you are raising a child singlehandedly, from birth until the child is old enough, where you would have provided everything, and then later someone offers you money to buy nappies, baby formula, and also teething medicines, once the child is an adult. Now we have to motivate how we are going to use the money for nappies. So that is how it feels.

However, I just want to table the Budget as we have an additional R1,605 billion. Now from the R26 billion that we had, it goes through now at

R27,856 billion in the first Adjustment for COVID-19, taking note that already we have utilised and reprioritised, from our own existing Budget, R435 million, in order to fight COVID-19.

Now with the additional R1,6 billion, R1 billion is for emergency expenditure that has been through Section 35 in terms of the PFMA. Thank you, Minister Maynier. R3 million from the Provincial Disaster Relief Grant, R552 million from the HIV, TB, Malaria, and Community Outreach Grant. Again, this is the money that we are receiving from National, four months after we have been fighting COVID-19.

How this money is going to be used:

- PPE – we have already spent R424 million in the four months since the pandemic started and have budgeted a total of R1 billion for the PPE initially.
- For testing we have established 54 testing units, at a cost of R93 million.
- For the field hospitals, which the Premier has already alluded to, we have invested in providing 850 beds at the CTICC, Hospital of Hope; 250 at Brackengate; 150 at Sonstraal that we are opening in the next week or so; 68 in Thusong, which have already been opened; and also take into consideration there are other field hospitals across the district, for example, the 32-bed field hospital as part of the Hermanus Hospital so that we could be able to accommodate the Overberg

District.

There are additional beds in the Harry Comay Hospital in George for a field hospital to accommodate the Garden Route. We have even added other beds in the Vredendal Hospital for a field hospital in order to accommodate the upper part of the West Coast.

- We have hired an additional 620 workers, which are inclusive of clinicians and non-clinicians to assist with this; taking note, hon Speaker, that there is a shortage of critical care beds, which is actually across the whole world. You always have a shortage of those in the public sector. You have to rely on the private sector for that.

So whilst we may already have budgeted specifically for those critical beds in the private sector, we have only utilised them for admissions in order to test the system.

Because we have been on the cutting edge of using science in terms of introducing dexamethasone and using high flow oxygen nasal cannula, it means that we do not have to use many private sector beds.

We have also invested internally within the provincial hospitals platform to also add 654 acute care beds, and 82 palliative care beds, and remember, hon Speaker, that when it comes to the hospital beds, a bed is not just a bed where it has a sheet and linen and all of that. It is

a bed that needs to respond to a particular disease or condition, hence you will find that a critical care bed will cost more than an acute bed.

As part of the infrastructure we have budgeted R444 million for the establishment of these field hospitals; R4 million on medical equipment, with an additional R130 million on order.

Hon Speaker, we have done our best to ensure that we spend taxpayers' money responsibly in order to optimise and offer the best service to the people. We believe in quality healthcare for all, and we care about the wellbeing of all the people, and as we indicated throughout, that for us we do not see this as politics, because health is too important to be reduced to such.

That is why we have made sure that with all other provinces, at this time that they are fighting COVID-19, as it was determined that for them their peak is still to come, or it is already there, whilst ours has plateaued, we have made [Inaudible – audio distorted.] everywhere in the country to make use of the lessons [Inaudible.] best practices and probably not so best practices that they could be able to avoid those.

The province is [Inaudible – audio distorted.] we must [Inaudible.] comprehensive health services for the non-Covid cases, all other conditions, as just because we are fighting COVID-19, they are not necessarily on holiday. We will be introducing that soon and also the new normal in terms of behavioural change.

†Ngalo mazwi ndenza emikhulu imibulelo, enkosi kakhulu ndiyabulela. [With those words I express my deepest gratitude. Thank you very much.] †Baie dankie. [Thank you] hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister Mbombo. Hon members, I now recognise hon member Windvogel.

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Good morning, hon Speaker, and hon members. Hon Speaker, the Special Adjustment Budget tabled last week has made available over R3,5 billion to fight against COVID-19.

South Africa recorded its first Corona virus case four months ago. Today we have a total over 471,000 confirmed cases, with 93,737 of these coming from the Western Cape. They have sadly recorded over 7 200 deaths with 2,983 of these coming from the Western Cape.

On 11 March, the same day that the Western Cape recorded its first case, the World Health Organisation declared the Novel Coronavirus a global pandemic.

From the outset of this pandemic the National Government had made its intentions clear, that it was all about saving lives. This is why on 15 March, the National Government declared a state of disaster, which culminated in a nationwide lockdown.

It was during this period that the DA showed its true colours, that it was mainly concerned about saving white persons over saving lives. Because of its poor handling of the pandemic, we continue to see an exponential rise in infections, even though in other provinces the curves are flattening. It was only recently, after the introduction of the new testing strategies, that we saw lower numbers due to under-testing.

Hon Speaker, testing and screening activities, together with additional bed capacity, are allocated over R257,4 million. There is absolutely no reason to continue with this strategy, unless its purpose is to deceive the public to believe the worst is over. This is far from the truth. Confirmed positive cases are only declining because we are conducting less tests.

Hon Speaker, the end result of this will be a prolonged peak or a second wave of infections, as many carriers of the virus are roaming the street undetected. Your data-led targeted the hotspots [Inaudible.] point you in one direction, and that is to use the available Budget to open up testing facilities to the broader community.

The Provincial Government choose to call this a budget to beat COVID-19. A research paper by St James School of Medicine in April, warned that space constraints, violence, and overcrowding in slums and tenements, make physical distancing and self-quarantine impractical, and the rapid spread of an infection high.

This so-called budget to beat COVID-19 does not address the underlying social realities, which results in the spread of this virus in working class communities like Khayelitsha, Nyanga, and Mitchells Plain.

The plans to dedensify the densely populated community have failed dismally due to inefficiency in Provincial Government. The MEC yesterday blamed the whole world for the Western Cape's infections but failed to acknowledge her own Government's shortcomings. These systemic challenges can also be found in the public healthcare system. One would have hoped that the R1,8 billion allocated to this Department is utilised not only to do the quick fixes, but to transform public healthcare.

The divide between our public and private healthcare has forced the Provincial Government to pay millions to the private sector to rent ICU beds, simply because we do not have enough beds and enough staff in the public healthcare system.

This is in line with what Dr Nicholas Crisp, an HI consultant with the National Government, recently said:

“What we have learned during COVID-19 is if we had one system where everyone was part of that system, and it had a logical structure, it would have been a lot easier to address the COVID-19 challenges that we face.”

One of the lessons we should have learnt is the urgent need to address the weaknesses exposed by COVID-19 in our public healthcare system.

There is a greater demand to strengthen our public health. It is disappointing that in this Budget all efforts are directed to the quick fixes, like temporary field hospitals, temporary staff members, additional bed capacity, as well as the procurement of PPE's, which arrived late, after thousands of workers had been exposed, with some losing their lives. As we dip our revolutionary flag to salute these fallen heroes and heroines, this Government should hang its head in shame for failing to protect them.

I am worried that when COVID-19 has passed, we will not have any tangible thing to show for all the billions spent. We will tell stories of field hospitals and temporary staff. As we move closer to the peak, we should also initiate discussions about the principles and policies for disposal of these procured assets.

Quality public healthcare will remain a dream for the poor people of the Western Cape. It is not in the best interests of this Government. This is why the [Inaudible.] oppose the NHI. This Budget will further worsen the challenge as baseline reductions affect the community clinics, such as the Villiersdorp Clinic and the Parow/Ravensmead CDC. The long awaited Klipfontein Regional Hospital to replace the Jooste Hospital will not be built any time soon, as its budget has also been cut, and so was the budget for upgrades and additions at Tygerberg Hospital. This clearly shows that when

COVID-19 passes our state of healthcare in the province will be at a worse place.

In closing, the Red Dot service must be extended to all regions. All health workers are in need of this services, not only those in the Metro. The poor bed occupancy in the quarantine and isolation facilities is a cause for serious concern. It may be as a result of the terrible conditions at the public facilities, which remain unaddressed as the Health Department and Transport and Public Works play the blame-game.

For the reasons stated above, the ANC does not support the Budget. I take this time to thank the health workers for their selflessness and dedication in the fight against COVID-19. I thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon members, thank you, hon member Windvogel. Hon members, I now recognise hon member Philander.

Ms W F PHILANDER: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, the announcement made by the President to allocate R20 billion to fight COVID-19 turned out to be the reprioritisation of existing provincial budgets. This should have come as no surprise as Minister Maynier pointed out that South Africa's debt levels are expected to skyrocket to R3 trillion in the next financial year.

The reality we face in South Africa today is that the ANC Government is

squandering money meant for the fight against COVID-19, through corruption and looting. This is setting every department and effectively every household up for a precarious financial future.

During the lockdown, when South Africans were doing their part in fighting this pandemic by staying home, which greatly impacted their income and livelihoods, and the ANC Government was supposed to build healthcare capacity, they used the crisis to line the pockets of cadres and comrades.

Hon Speaker, in the DA Western Cape we have seen and experienced commitment to and by the Western Cape Health Department, as COVID-19 hit our shores. The Hospital Association indicated it will use the Service Level Agreement established in the Western Cape as a blueprint for other provinces. Surely this is evidence that this Provincial Government must be doing something right.

The R1 billion in emergency funding in May already helped established three field hospitals, with over 1,200 beds, conducted 300,000 tests, and screened close to 1 million people. It capacitated hospitals with ventilators and additional staff, as well as PPE's to healthcare facilities, to ensure we fight this virus head-on.

Hon Speaker, R1 billion is the exact amount lost within the National Social Development Department under SASSA, as implementing agency. This effectively means South Africa could have stood with double the healthcare

capacity. Instead, the lockdown was extended, which laid the basis for a nationwide socio-economic pandemic. Fortunately, through prudent financial management and sound governance in the Western Cape, we managed to bolster our in-patient capacity ahead of our peak in this province.

Gauteng surpassed the Western Cape and became the new epicentre for COVID-19 in South Africa. At mid-July, along with the Eastern Cape, they have recorded just under 150,000 cases in the country, with only approximately 700 beds available for utilisation.

The launch of the bed bureau system and the chat box system non-COVID-19 related chronic care, helped ensure we coordinated these efforts with ease in the Western Cape.

The upward adjustment of R1,605,512,000 over and above baseline budget amounts to a new total budget of R27,857,030,000 for the Provincial Department of Health, and is evidently worth every cent.

Moreover, I wish to welcome the 100% reusable status of the Hospital of Hope. This truly speaks to the intrinsic value of strategic planning, financial management, and speaks volumes about crisis management in the Western Cape. Hon Speaker, we are not scootering around and there are no signs of commissions to recover stolen Covid funds in the Western Cape. Neither will any service provider be appointed that does not meet the standards and requirements. There is no finger in the pie business in the Western Cape.

The ANC seems to be oblivious that they are stealing public money. Not National Government money, it is public money. They seem to be oblivious that people are dying, hon Speaker.

We can testify to the commitment of a people-centred government in the Western Cape. The head of the COVID-19 ICU Ward at Tygerberg Hospital has stated in a media report that the treatment of patients has drastically changed from how it was initially approached in the early days of the disease. She further states they planned well, and they planned early.

Hon Speaker, quite accurately we have yet to experience anything like COVID-19 before, but nowhere near the sense of once in a blue moon, and we certainly had no idea what to expect. What we did expect was a government that will do everything possible during the lockdown period to ensure that all systems are in place to fight this pandemic. A government that will ensure that its budget is aligned to best service the people of this province, doing the best with what they have and more.

Hon Speaker, trust is a word that cannot be used in the same sentence as the National Government. I hope it will come to its senses and prioritise the IMF loan to rectify the shameful injustice done to the people of this country.

We saw the Western Cape healthcare system under severe pressure, but even if we had all the money in the world, we did not aim to only commit to figures, but to each and every frontline worker in this province, and to the

lives of all our residents.

Hon Speaker, nowhere in South Africa have we seen a more persistent government. Daily accurate updates, personal engagements across all platforms, rigorous and determined to save lives and livelihoods. We salute each and every healthcare worker on all levels in every facility, for their selfless efforts every single day, and if the Opposition wishes to howl against these efforts, it should be directed to the appropriate level of government and how their inconsistent approach to this pandemic hampered the livelihoods of citizens who have entrusted them to govern.

The Opposition members in this House forget that the people of this province elected them to their positions, and that is whom they should be accountable to, and not to their national comrades.

Hon Speaker, we should show remorse for inadequate governance, and I hope that the polls will be the judge of that. This pandemic granted the opportunity, along with challenges, to reprioritise spending in the best interests of the people that elected us and reinforce a humanitarian response and revive the economy.

Hon Speaker, in this crisis management there is no space for scoring political points. We must, however, acknowledge mistakes, because the only way we can fight this pandemic is by responding better together.

Hon Speaker, one life lost to this pandemic is one life too many. I wish to extend my best wishes to those currently in recovery and extend my sincere sympathies to the families of those who lost the fight. Either we have or we all know someone affected by this pandemic. It must be our individual prerogative and responsibility to endure and make the best of this trying time. The Western Cape efforts are led by a capable Premier, a dedicated Executive, and committed Western Cape Government staff across the board.

Hon Speaker, the Special Adjustment Budget of R3,5 billion, of which the Western Cape Health Department received R1,8 billion, is indeed a budget of a committed and responsible government to beat COVID-19. A budget not just reflecting figures on paper, but a budget that already secured the strongest healthcare systems in place, in order to effectively manage this pandemic, and willing and able to address the needs of all people in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, people in the Western Cape can experience placing their trust in the Democratic Alliance was not a mistake. We have no need to ask our leaders, spearheading their departments, to show ethical leadership. They work for the people of this province, and they serve the people of this province.

The DA in the Western Cape remains committed in its oversight role to ensure that readiness strategies in the management and the response of COVID-19 by provincial departments remain aligned in, with the healthcare

needs of the people in our province, and it is with this, hon Speaker, that I table my support for this Budget, and my support to Vote 6, and I thank you.

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

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Philander. Hon members, I now recognise hon member Makamba-Botya.

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: Thank you, hon Speaker. The Western Cape Department of Health still fails to address [Inaudible – audio distorted.] provincial health sector, despite experiencing an Adjustment Budget increase of more than R1,6 billion.

From the outset it is apparent that issues of staff training and compliance with occupational health and safety procedures within the provincial health sector, are not adequately addressed by the Budget. This is so despite a shocking discovery by labour inspectors early this month that the majority of health workers in the province remain not properly trained, and therefore do not adhere to standardised health and safety procedures.

The discovery is the reason why more than 300 health workers at Tygerberg and Ceres hospitals tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in a number of hospital units being forced to shut down. Despite all of this, the primary healthcare training remains unmoved and shockingly low at R1,000, with health science and training also remaining unchanged.

In the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Trauma Unit at Tygerberg Hospital remained crowded due to the hospital's old and bad design. This adds to the increase of COVID-19 transmissions amongst patients at the hospital. The Tygerberg Hospital project that was meant to revamp and rebuild the hospital remains dead and buried, with officials offering one excuse after another.

Under the leadership of DA, the healthcare sector continues to participate in the exploitation of black people instead of filling the vacancies by directly employing healthcare staff members and remunerating them directly; the Department instead makes use of third party agency services, who take the bulk of the salaries of these healthcare workers, and leaves them with peanuts.

Hon Speaker, I would like the Minister of Health to actually give us clarity on the issue of the R1,000 that has been budgeted for healthcare training. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Makamba-Botya. Hon members, I now recognise hon member Herron.

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you, hon Speaker. We support Vote 6, thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Herron. Nice and sweet. I now recognise hon member Christians.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Speaker. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The numbers are going down, and on behalf of the ACDP we want to thank all the healthcare workers for what they are doing. For what they are doing is working.

I said it yesterday, I want to say it again: HASA, the Hospital Association of South Africa, had high praise for the Western Cape Health Department, and I think, as the ACDP, we want to congratulate the Department under the leadership of Dr Cloete for work well done.

So, hon Speaker, we support this Adjustment Budget, I thank you.
[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Christians. I now recognise hon member Marais.

Mr P J MARAIS: Thank you, hon Speaker. I support this Budget, but I want to warn the Department of Health, we are paying a very heavy price for our neglect of, and funding of teaching hospitals, academic hospitals: Groote Schuur, Somerset, Red Cross, and Tygerberg. We need researchers, we need to draw the big brains around the world to South Africa, so that they can do research in finding cures for epidemics and pandemics, like COVID-19.

We have had enough now of taking money away from academic hospitals towards primary healthcare. Primary healthcare, Minister, will never cure a

pandemic like COVID-19. This will be done by academic hospitals where the research is done. We have to pump more money into these hospitals to make sure that if any other pandemic strikes South Africa, we will be ready to fight such a pandemic. We are playing with fire ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr P J MARAIS: ... by pumping more money into clinics ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: ... hon member Marais.

Mr P J MARAIS: ... and not in a teaching hospital.

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

Hon members, I now recognise hon member Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Poor, old people in the Western Cape still have to stand in lines, the whole day at hospitals and clinics, and queue in long lines, standing in the rain and in the cold. From the Al Jama-ah's perspective on the Provincial Health Department, the only solution to our health situation is that in the Western Cape we have approximately 500 wards, so each ward must have a hospital like Tygerberg Hospital. That is the solution to our health challenges. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Brinkhuis. Hon members, I now

recognise the hon Minister of Health.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: †Enkosi Somlomo. [Thank you, Speaker.] Thank you to the hon members for your input, specifically for those who have voted, supporting the Budget, hon member Herron, hon member Christians, hon member Marais, hon member Brinkhuis, and also hon member Philander. Thank you very much.

Hon Speaker, I also want to indicate that I am aware that there may be some of us who might have contracted the virus and, as we already indicated previously, it does not discriminate. Everyone gets infected. So for those who have already had the virus, or have it right now, we support you, and you are in our prayers.

I think, hon Speaker, it is crucial because we have been presenting to these committees and also on a weekly basis to the Premier through a digicom, and also in some instances even us as a department, or even myself individually, will share all of this in social media. That is some of us at least will be given an opportunity to read and understand what is happening.

I just want to respond to the issue of testing first. The President, before the last one, in his speech addressing the nation, did indicate that the entire country, everyone, all the districts, are now a hotspot. Science determines that when you are in a hotspot it means you have to change the strategy for testing, and the hotspot, according to the Department of National Health, is

in Stage 5.

Stage 4 was about mass community screening and testing, where everyone could go anywhere and it was about knowing your Covid status, but in Stage 5 testing is targeted. I think it is on page 4 of the President's speech, in terms of that.

In addition to that, science does show, according to WHO, four kinds of scenarios in terms of the spread of the epidemic. We have got scenario 1: where you are being prepared when there is no determined case. For example, at the time, on 2 March, when we started, we had our first media engagement in the Western Cape, talking about the preparedness. There was no case at the time, but we have to, in terms of the response, talk about being prepared.

Then you get another scenario where you might have less than five cases, or sporadic cases. Up to the level where in the red you now have a hotspot. In the hotspot you have to contain the virus in terms of the spread, and also number 2, the most important thing is that you have to target the vulnerable.

At the time, the Western Cape changed the strategy as we were already a hotspot, whilst the other provinces were still at Stage 4, which is the cluster outbreaks, because you will remember we were the frontrunners.

So it means that in terms of science you have to focus on the vulnerable. However, hon Speaker, I need to indicate that even before that we would not have been able to implement testing with the circumstances being such that

we were failed by National. At the end of May we had a backlog of 27,000 tests that did not have results. Take note that National is the custodian of the land. We have only got one National Health Lab with branches all over the provinces, but it is still under National.

Now when you have a situation where a person is under investigation, where people are in the hospital, where you find that they are waiting for their results, it makes it difficult for the clinicians to be able to finalise the intervention, because they are waiting for the test, and now that person is competing with another person who might have tested, because they want to know their Covid status.

We ended up having a situation where the hospitals were getting full because we would not know whether the person now has to go to the COVID-19 Ward, or the person has to go to intermediate care, or the person has to go to a higher level, because we did not know the positive status, except in terms of how [Inaudible.] manage.

Also, the healthcare workers. They had to compete with other people outside, where one ended up having a situation when one has been exposed to a positive co-worker, and then you have to test, because the protocol at the time was that you test on the eighth day for health workers, and then if they test negative, they go back to work, but you have to wait for longer for results because of the National backlog. Actually the whole country backlog at the time was more than 100,000, and then for us it was 27,000.

So in response to hon member Windvogel. The testing:

1. Is related to the National protocol, because we are in a hotspot.
2. It is related to the delays that came from the National Health Lab, Health Laboratory Services. Yet, if you recall, they did promise us they will be providing more capacity in terms of the testing, because we still see a situation where it is the private sector that tests more than anyone else.

So I need to just to indicate that.

With regard to the notion that the Western Cape is plateauing because we are not testing more, remember, the whole country is a hotspot. Testing does not [Inaudible.] where we are now as a country. It is not a conclusive determinant in terms of whether you are going up or going down. The hospital admissions and the number of deaths are the ones that are reliable indicators.

If one is ill, that person will go to the hospital. If one has got a mild infection, he will go the clinic. If one is positive, yes, one might be positive, but that does not necessarily mean that person will have to go to a hospital. It means that, yes, of course, because you are in the local transmission area of a hotspot, it is likely that many people will be infected, but the question is, is it a bad situation where it results in hospitalisation? So we have seen, for example, as at 21 June, that the hospitalisations are coming down, death is

coming down.

Now with the deaths in the health system, we have deaths we are able to account for. There will be people who might die at home without knowing their Covid status. Hence in the Western Cape we will do swabs in terms of testing, before certifying the cause of death. If the person comes as an emergency to a hospital and then dies there without being tested, then posthumously you would take a tissue sample at the autopsy so that you could determine the cause of death.

So we are not surprised where we find that there are still some elements of death going up, but of course there are some of the areas that are not clear. For example, there was a time that we had more deaths in Khayelitsha and Klipfontein, which now has been reduced, but we see these now are going on outside, for example, for the Metro. Then also, some of the deaths are reported through the MRC, those ones that probably have been left behind, because all the deaths will ultimately be reported to the Department of Home Affairs.

So that is why we would be able to account even for those that are excess deaths. When we talk about the deaths that are coming down, we are including those, because on the weekly basis we do have an engagement, and also with the MRC. So just to take that in consideration.

The issue that we are using private health for beds, because we are not sure –

no. The province which is using private health, even acute beds, is Gauteng. The Western Cape has never used any private hospital beds for acute beds, because we are not short of beds. Out of all the 50 plus hospitals, specifically the local ones in the Metro, the hospitals that have reached more than 80% of Covid cases, are only two. These are Khayelitsha and Eerste River.

The only time that we made arrangements for patients to be admitted to a private hospital was for the critical care for four patients. NB, four patients to test the system, because now some patients do not need ICU for High Oxygen Flow, which we have seen in Groote Schuur, because they are not using the ICU for the High Flow Nasal Oxygen Flow.

The same applies that we have introduced Dexamethasone. You find that some of the patients do not need mechanical ventilation that warrants one to go to the ICU. So that is why it is unlikely that you might be using any other private hospital. Taking note that private health is a National competency. It is the National Health Minister who negotiated the prices of the 16,000, for example, and then for each and every province has to do a service level agreement, because taking note that private hospitals do not appoint specialists, they only appoint nurses and other support, and therefore you have to go again to each province with an individual agreement, signing with a radiologist, with a specialist, with a lab, with a whatever, to cover the 16,000. No, it is not us, we have not used that.

Taking note, we once approached National to use the military hospitals where

they said no, we cannot use them, but you have seen that now all of them went to ask the Eastern Cape.

The issue about the PPE's, that staff are being infected because they got these late; no, that is an untruth. Through you, hon Speaker. For us the delay of what we ordered at the time, because we were ready from the beginning, was because at the time they stopped international travelling, so there was a plane or a boat, or ship, that we were waiting for. Which eventually came with the PPE's.

Do you know that we did, hon Speaker? We gave some of those PPE's to the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape. That is what we did.

So we have never had any shortage of the PPE, but for us we have to be strict that people must not ask for more, like for PPE, D, E F, in an area when the PPE is A, B, C, D. Hence you keep on saying, do not use N95 masks in a place where there is a low exposure risk. The same applies with all others.

If you recall, there was a time that the EMS were asking for more. So we managed to work around that part of it.

Hon Speaker, take note, National gave us a conditional grant for HIV. It is a HIV conditional grant. It does not take care of the issue of building field hospitals. It does not take care of continuing a permanent structure. Building field hospitals is everywhere, internationally. To respond to this virus, you

have to build temporary structures, because in some cases people just need oxygen and all of those. It is not necessary for permanent admissions.

Yes, prior to Covid we used to have bed shortages. That is why we did submit at the time to National Treasury, and also they did confirm that the Tygerberg Regional Hospital, which is there by Belhar, will reduce the workload in the existing Tygerberg Hospital. They did confirm at the time that they were going to give us some money, plus also the Jooste Hospital, the Klipfontein Regional Hospital, as part of the promises that, "We are going to do it," but remember we are using this Budget as part of the provision in the National Disaster Management Act, so we are in the disaster.

So now it cannot be, it is unfair you will be asking us in this Budget: what are you going to do, when are you going to build clinic A, B, C? Yet we are responding to COVID. Even the members can look at the recent response, I think it was yesterday. In terms of the President's Office, National share the infrastructure. Go and zoom there and see and account how much of the infrastructure is from the Western Cape. Dololo, the last time I checked it was some lousy project somewhere in Bergrivier, but you will find that there is nothing that is coming from that side.

And then the issue, hon Speaker, related to the overcrowding and all of those, also about some of the utterances that were mentioned by hon member Makamba-Botya, I do not want to entertain many of those things where you will find that there is no evidence and also some of them are not so scientific,

but I just want again to urge the members that they must go and read. There is a website there, everything. We have been a transparent Government throughout. We have made sure that we even respond to everyday queries that are coming in from the individual members and all of those.

The last part that she raised is about the issue of what is the money for the training. Remember, with a critical care nurse, specifically ICU, even if you do have more beds for those or enough beds, there will always be a case where you will find that a dorm might not have everyone who is ICU-trained and also including the nurses and the doctors. So you have to keep on building your own team in that aspect.

The issue of the community health workers, it is a national competency as part of Resolution 1 of 2018 in terms of the Public Bargaining Council around that.

And then lastly, hon Speaker, we are still waiting for the promises of the President who said he was going to help us. When he came and opened the CTICC, he made a promise that he was going to provide more. Secondly, hon Speaker, the National Department of Health promised that they received some of the PPE's via, I think, Turkey and that they sent it to the Department of Defence because it is already here in Cape Town, so that they could provide it to us. It has been six weeks now that we have been waiting for those. So I just want to thank all those people who have contributed. There have been different countries, from the US, Taiwan, the Chinese, the individuals, the

companies and everyone who has assisted us, thank you very much. Thank you also to our other members who have contributed to this debate. Thank you, hon Speaker.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Hon members: that concludes the debate on this Vote. I now move to Vote 11 which is the Third Order of the Day and the Secretary will read the Order.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 11 – Agriculture – Western Cape Adjustment Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill (2020/21 Financial Year) [B4 - 2020].

The SPEAKER: Thank you Mr Secretary. I now recognise the hon Minister of Agriculture, Dr Meyer.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, hon Premier and Cabinet colleagues, hon Leader of the Official Opposition, hon Leaders of Opposition parties and hon members of the Western Cape Legislature, I rise today to table Vote 11, the Adjusted Budget for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. Hon Deputy Speaker, we have seen that COVID-19 had many challenges as we move forward in this particular period and COVID-19 also had immediately the following broad range of challenges.

Firstly, we have seen disruptions in value chains caused by bottlenecks in ports and the limited space for air cargo. We have seen disruptions in markets as a result of the ban on wine, tobacco, flower sales and closure of restaurants. A loss of market share caused by the export ban and poor air freight inefficiencies handed shelf space on a golden platter to our competitors. The increased cost of compliance led to production of inefficiencies due to social distancing, cost of personal protection equipment and changing domestic and overseas consumption patterns, and also a weakening exchange rate.

Hon Speaker, the list could continue but the main distinguishing factor between COVID-19 and other disasters is that the production base of farming remained intact. During a drought, hon Speaker, trees die and the veld deteriorates. During a flood it washes away the orchards, roads and other infrastructure. During an outbreak of avian influenza it leads to the culling of ostriches and chickens. None of these happened during COVID-19.

Hon Speaker, COVID-19 did underline the importance of farming and the vulnerability of food supply to the average consumer. Hon Speaker, during the first quarter the GDP numbers published by Stats SA show that there is a further decline in South Africa's economic performance by 2%. Hon members, this decline comes after the country already entered into a technical recession in the final quarter of 2019.

The sectoral performance indicates that agricultural growth increased by

27,8% when compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. Now, this growth comes from improved performance in many of the significant farming industries. There is some evidence, hon Speaker, that the Western Cape agricultural sector is set to recover from the significant impact of the drought. The main drivers of this recovery are improved total production for table grapes, stone fruit and pome fruit.

However, hon Speaker, COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on industries such as the wine and the flower industry. Since regulations to combat the spread of the virus will remain in force for the immediate future, the implications for the agritourism sector remain a serious concern here in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, it is worth noting that when one compares the first quarter of 2019, the number of farm workers in South Africa has increased by 4% in the first quarter of 2020. R970 million was allocated to the Department of Agriculture in the Main Budget in the beginning of this year. The Main Budget that we tabled made provision for R970 million. This budget came to finance critical posts such as three cold rooms in support for black farmers, specifically commercial farmers in the Overberg district, the table grape market development in China via the South African table grape industry, market access improvement through biotechnology and increasing fruit export opportunities on the African continent and the expansion of alien vegetation clearing in river catchment areas.

Hon Speaker, R56,7 million in provisional equitable shares was surrendered specifically for the Western Cape Government's COVID-19 response plan, spearheaded by the Departments of Health, Transport, Public Works and Local Government in this province. The detail will be unpacked by my Cabinet colleagues: the Ministers of Health, Transport, Public Works and the Minister of Local Government, Environment and Development Planning, and the Minister of Health has just done so before me now.

The decision by the Department of Agriculture nationally, Land Reform and Rural Development to cut the comprehensive agricultural support programme Ilima Letsema is a severe blow to agriculture here in the Western Cape. Hon Speaker, the cut of R21 million of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Grant, the national condition grant, has also a direct impact on the number of black farmers that will be assisted. The cut of R9 million in the Ilima Letsema conditional grant has a direct impact on the number of food gardens we can establish, as well as the agri-processing.

This Government, hon Speaker, is committed to grow our agricultural sector and will, despite these cuts, remain resolute in our plans to expand our agricultural production and specifically in the post-COVID-19 era. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Hon members, I now recognise hon Marran.

Mr P MARRAN: Good morning, hon Speaker, thank you very much. Good morning to everyone present. Hon Speaker, as we deliberate on this Budget to beat COVID-19, I wish to air my disappointment in that in this Vote there is nothing that seeks to suggest the Department is actively involved in the fight against COVID-19. The agri-sector was one of the identified clusters for COVID-19 infections, yet this Department never really played an active role to combat the spread.

We have called for Government action to force companies in the sector to adhere to COVID-19 regulations. When farmers were transporting hundreds of workers at the back of their trucks, we called on this Government to play an active role to combat the spread. When it came, it was proven that seasonal workers travelling from the Western Cape to the Eastern Cape were spreading the virus. This Government and this Budget are silent on these challenges.

Last week the Department of Employment and Labour laid charges against a Ceres farmer for failing to comply with COVID-19 regulations. Labour inspectors found that he brought 160 seasonal workers from the Eastern Cape, yet there were no contracts of employment, including that there was no proper health screening conducted before the departure. It was also discovered that there was no COVID-19 risk assessment in place. There was a lack of sanitation and poor application of protective wear, and no adequate social distancing was observed. And when you speak to the farmer, he will tell you that the assistance that he received from the Department of

Agriculture within the Western Cape was very limited.

This is not the only farm where such happens. There are ten thousand migrant workers that are currently returning to the province from the Eastern Cape. We needed this Department, through this Budget, to augment the work of the labour inspectors. It is disappointing that there is no allocation in this Budget for anything related to preventing the spread in farms and farming communities. The attitude of this Government is well-captured in a message that the hon MEC Madikizela sent to the Eastern Cape Government when it was complained about the number of seasonal workers and other people travelling to the province from the Western Cape. Hon MEC Madikizela said and I quote:

“Do your job and stop moaning.”

This is the same attitude that this Government is showing to farmers. This Budget is not empathetic to the agricultural sector. The sector has suffered a massive blow as a result of the outbreak of the Corona virus. This is like a double tragedy as many in the industry are still suffering from the effects of drought. To add salt to the wound, the National Government revoked the classification of drought as a national disaster.

Many parts of the Western Cape remain drought-stricken. Many farmers, especially the small-scale farmers, will find it extremely hard to survive the effects of both COVID-19 and drought. Farmers have had to dig deeper in

their pockets in order to ensure, to procure needed material to comply with COVID-19 regulations.

The least the Provincial Government could have done through this Budget was to make an effort towards alleviating the impact of COVID-19 and drought in the sector. The farmers look up to this Government for urgent interventions, but nothing is forthcoming. The DA Government has left the farmers to fend for themselves.

The reductions in this Budget also affected critical projects such as the Brandvlei, as well as the Clanwilliam canal with the premature surrendering of these funds to Provincial Treasury.

The R1,2 billion relief package of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is welcomed assistance and will go a long way in alleviating the impact. We have to thank the National Minister and the Department for coming through for farmers when this Department has failed them.

The joys of this support package are short-lived, as this Budget Adjustment has made drastic reductions in the conditional grants for Ilima Letsema and the comprehensive agricultural support programmes. This is a hard blow to farmers. It will have a detrimental effect on farmers' support, especially to black farmers.

In these difficult times, farmers live to regret past financial decisions made by this Department, such as the R22,2 million that was surrendered to the Provincial Revenue Fund in the last adjustment process. Is there no way in which the Department could recover those funds, to use them to cushion the farmers from the severe impact of COVID-19 and drought?

Hon Speaker, the agricultural sector is amongst the main players in the economy of the Western Cape and will be very instrumental in the drive to recover the economy. The MEC often brags about the strong agri-industry in the Western Cape that is worth over R43 billion. It is for that reason that the Provincial Government needs to put measures in place to cushion the industry from the economic impact. Doing so is also a way to protect jobs and livelihoods, especially of farmers that live in squalor.

The impact of COVID-19 on the wine industry is severe. The livelihoods of workers have been affected. This also includes those workers in restaurants and on wine farms. The Government knows all of these challenges, yet it has failed to make provision for a humanitarian relief package within this Budget. Even the budget for food security programmes has been slashed and so was the budget for rural development. The Budget can be called anything, but it is not a budget to beat COVID-19 and it certainly does not assist the agricultural sector in any way. The Budget has failed to step up when farmers and farm workers needed it the most.

Hon Speaker, for that reason the ANC cannot support this Vote 11. I thank

you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Marran. Hon members, I now recognise hon Van der Westhuizen.

Mr AP VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: Hon Speaker and members, we must not forget what caused us having to consider two Adjustment Budgets this year. What brought us here today are the extreme effects of a virus which has caused huge and unexpected expenditure, particularly for health services. The additional costs are, however, not limited to healthcare. It indeed required a reprioritisation of all our budgets and as we heard yesterday in this House we are, to a large extent, left to find our own solutions and savings.

Hon members, can you imagine how different things would have been if the ANC-run Government acted faster and earlier in March of this year and I am not referring to the implementation of the hard lockdown some 127 days ago, something which the hon Dugmore yesterday praised as the success story of the Central Government. I am also not referring to the military-style curfews that we all were and still find ourselves being subjected to, nor of the closing of schools, factories, restaurants, hairdressers, etcetera, or the flip-flopping on liquor sales and the reopening of schools.

I am asking you: think carefully about the following potential scenario. Can you imagine how different things would have been for all South Africans if the Central Government, who is responsible for managing cross-border travel,

introduced a compulsory quarantine period of just seven days for incoming travellers to our beloved country at the beginning of March this year? This whole pandemic could have been avoided and infections would have been limited to a small number of international travellers. Can you imagine a South Africa where the death rate would not have spiked? Can you imagine a South Africa where to date 460 000 South Africans, and the number is still growing fast, would not have fallen ill to COVID-19? Imagine a South Africa where unemployment would have come down and not gone up; a South Africa where hundreds of thousands of poor South Africans would not have been humiliated daily by having to queue for hours for a bowl of soup or where our country's debt would not have spiralled on its way to 100% of annual GDP; and where we would not have had to go begging for loans from institutions funded by better-run countries. Can you imagine a country where ANC cadres would not be exploiting the pandemic to enrich themselves, where all provinces spend money on items that will really save lives and where taxes are spent in the public interest and not the well-connected?

Do you realise that this could all have been avoided if our Government acted in time to stop the virus from entering our country, but the ANC-led Government failed and since then we have been subjected to harsh and often silly, senseless decisions by a body that is not accountable to Parliament or any structure. Hon Leader of the Opposition, you should hang your head in shame for representing a party with such disgraceful members.

If it was not for this failure, South Africa would have been spared this crisis and we would have been able to go about our daily lives normally, like many other countries in the world. And our economic outlook would have been far better. Yet this failure of the Central Government has caused us to be ranked fifth in the world in terms of the number of infections. Again, we should hang our heads in shame for this failure by National Government.

We are here today to debate the proposed adjustments to the Budget for the Department of Agriculture, a department whose only purpose is to support agriculture in as many ways as possible and we have seen some great initiatives from the Department to deal with the challenges.

This is the only Department of Agriculture that assists in more ways than just emergency fodder relief for animals. This Department of Agriculture also focuses on the needs of farm workers and former farm workers in drought-stricken areas and I am referring to the funding of projects such as the Expanded Public Works Green Opportunities Programme to clean riverbeds of aliens and debris because we believe that it will rain again. Hon Speaker, I will later return to Pretoria's stance on the drought.

Agriculture has been highlighted in the National Development Plan as a sector with the ability to grow a million jobs by 2030. Agriculture is also important as it allows us as a country to produce enough food for all our people. One would think that this Central Government, like many others, would be garnering the maximum support possible for agriculture. Yet while

the Western Cape has a proven track record of supporting agriculture and those involved in the sector, the Central Government has been missing in action. While we appreciate the drought assistance of R25 million, the need is for about six times this amount.

The ANC's policies are continuously threatening food production. Just think of their stance on the expropriation without compensation and what this has done to possible investment in agriculture and the continuous delays in the finalisation of land claims have been affecting long-term planning and the expansion of activities for those possibly affected by such land claims.

The one million additional jobs referred to in the National Development Plan would have been created, enlarged by the expansion of irrigation schemes, which is the responsibility of the Central Government. Yet nothing has come of the promise by Minister Lindiwe Sisulu to provide R20 million for the work to increase the capacity of the canal from the Brandvlei Dam. Similarly, the work on the new Clanwilliam Dam wall was seriously delayed, presumably because the ANC Minister of Water Affairs could not figure out how to benefit her friends and her party in the process. And as stated before, we all know that tenders, even procurement for the pandemic, have become the ATMs of the ANC and its cronies and because of corruption there is no money left to extend the water infrastructure to the beneficiaries of the recently settled Ebenezer land claim. Without water, they will never see the benefits of owning that land.

Not only do we see little in the form of new projects from National Government, existing infrastructure is also being neglected and not maintained. An example of this is the lack of maintenance on the old irrigation canals in the Matzikama area. This maintenance should actually be undertaken by the National Department of Water Affairs.

Our farmers have also suffered under irrational bans on tobacco products and on liquor sales. They were even stopped from exporting wine to hard-won foreign markets without any proof that this can be justified in terms of any risks of COVID-19 infections. It required some hard lobbying from the Western Cape, including from this Department and the hon Minister Meyer, to convince the Command Council to reverse its senseless decision and to indeed allow exports to resume.

But this is not all, hon Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition has even more reason to hang his head in shame. As referred to earlier, large parts of the Western Cape, as is the case with other provinces, are still experiencing a severe drought, yet drought relief has been far too little and many farmers are only surviving through the actions of non-governmental organisations and individuals and can you believe it, against this backdrop the Central ANC Government has just terminated the declaration of the drought as a national disaster. Rainfall figures are still way below the long-term average, even in those areas where the dam levels are showing some improvement on last year's statistics.

The fighting of crime is primarily the responsibility of the Police Services under the control of Pretoria. Rampant and escalating crime has also brought about various costs for agriculture. Theft of equipment has resulted in higher costs for alarm systems, expensive fences, the replacement of copper cables and irrigation equipment, to name but a few. The hardship endured by many farmers can be measured against the numbers of active farmers. Statistics show that the number of farmers is sharply decreasing, and many rural areas are suffering because of this.

Farm murders are continually on the rise because the Central Government and SAPS do not offer rural citizens the protection they are entitled to. Many of these murders are preceded by severe torturing. Keep in mind that it is the ANC Government that abolished the rural safety network and that allowed the Police Service in this province to suffer with critical vacancies and incompetent leaders. It is also the ANC Government that disbanded the commando system and that ignored the red flags raised at the time by concerned rural communities. Again, it is the failure of Pretoria that forced this Department to draft a rural safety plan. Surely, in a well-functioning country this should not be the task of an agriculture department?

As we heard yesterday, this province had to fund the response to COVID-19 largely from its own sources and the Department of Agriculture did not escape this reality. The Budget before us was cut by R87 million or 9%. This is a significant figure, particularly against inflation and other cost pressures. There is not a single programme of the Department which escaped the

financial scalpel. What is disconcerting is to see which grants from National have been cut. Pretoria claimed to be on the side of the poor, yet more than R21 million was cut from the grant meant to support the beneficiaries of land reform, the so-called CASP or Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme, this while we all know just how important financial support is for the survival of new beneficiaries.

Similarly, and Minister Meyer referred to that, R9 million was taken from the Ilima Letsema initiative, an initiative to support poor communities to become more food secure.

Members of the ANC, can you see how it is again the poor that suffer most because of the ANC Government's strange priorities?

As stated earlier in my speech, agriculture has also been negatively affected by the decisions of the National Command Council on COVID-19. Fortunately the damage is not as bad as in some other sectors, as agriculture was seen as an essential service and therefore allowed to continue operating.

The Western Cape is already contributing more than 45% of all South Africa's agricultural exports and economists tell us that this year's agricultural exports may even be higher and better than last year. I believe that agriculture will play a significant role in the economic recovery of the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, fellow members, it is important that this important industry and the Department of Agriculture be supported. I therefore call on you all to support this Budget Vote. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Van der Westhuizen. Hon members, I now recognise hon Xego.

Mr M XEGO: Thank you, hon Speaker. The Western Cape agricultural sector under our current Government remains exclusionary with no intent of transformation whatsoever. Potential black farmers are not only denied access to land and financing by the Cabinet but are also denied by the untransformed banking sector. It does not make sense that in a province with an untransformed agricultural sector, the budget for farm support and development is reduced by R41,4 million per sector. This is the money that should have been used to support struggling potential black farmers who want to participate in the sector.

The Department failed to support the plight of seasonal farm workers earlier this year, who got infected with COVID-19 and went to travel to the Eastern Cape and infected the others. This Budget Adjustment makes no provision for the safety of those workers going forward. This is further evidence that the DA Government only cares about the owners of the means of production and less about the plight and safety of those providing labour.

Furthermore, the Department makes no provision to develop policy that will

endorse transformation within the agricultural sector. The DA Government just does not care about the integration of black people in an economy that is dominated by white people. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Xego. Hon members, I now recognise hon Herron.

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you, hon Speaker. We support the Vote.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Herron. I now recognise hon Christians.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, the ACDP supports the Adjustment Budget. I just want to know from the Minister, the R9 million that must go to food gardens, how will that impact the Western Cape and what is he and his Department going to do about it because we know that is one of the areas where people can look after themselves and not wait for handouts? And also, if the Minister can tell us the impact of the R21 million on the land reform, how will that impact the Western Cape and what is he and his Department going to do on that? Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Christians. Hon members, I now recognise hon Marais.

Mr P J MARAIS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Minister, I want you to please pay all your attention to getting the Coloured people's land back. The 13

rural areas which were placed under the Minister of Land Affairs after the Tricameral Parliament ceased to exist: we want these areas back in trust for our Coloured community. I am talking about Zoar, Amalienstein, Friemersheim, Ebenezer, Haarlem, Rietpoort, Kranshoek, Mamre, Pniel, Slangrivier, Genadendal. We want our land back, Saron, Elim, Pacaltsdorp.

This was given to us in 1909 by England. Before we became part of South Africa, we were a Cape Colony and those rural lands belonged to the Coloured people. We want it back. The Minister of Land Affairs must give that land back which he is holding in trust. We are sick and tired of hearing that we are second-class citizens. We were the original landowners ...
[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Marais. You have just exhausted your time, thank you.

An HON MEMBER: Support land, no compensation, it is the only way.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, order. I now recognise hon Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, 82% of the agricultural land in the Western Cape is still in the hands of colonialism. This is clearly a strategic move by you-know-who. Nevertheless, the AI Jama-Ah encourages this Department to continue their efforts and also help the farm workers. Thank you, hon Speaker.

An HON MEMBER: By who?

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Brinkhuis. Hon members, I now recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Thank you, hon Speaker and thank you to the hon members who took part in this debate. I take all these comments very seriously and thank you for this debate. I think this debate will help us to improve agriculture not only in the Western Cape, but also South Africa. But I do think hon member Marran is wrong on the issue that the Department has done absolutely nothing in the context of COVID-19. I will now extensively explain what this Department has done. He was a member of the meeting chaired by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee and I will certainly reply to his comments in that particular regard.

I think we have also no evidence that farm workers from the Western Cape travelled to the Eastern Cape and infected. There is absolutely no evidence. We have asked for the evidence, both myself, the Minister of Health, as well as the Minister of Transport and Public Works and we have certainly developed a protocol in terms of the transportation of seasonal workers. Part of that protocol is that people must be tested or rather be screened, that there must be sanitisers and all the necessary COVID-19 protocols involved in the transportation, in other words the taxi. Also the person who does the screening on the farm of the workers that will be travelling to the Eastern Cape, they had to fill in on the transport permit the name of the person that

did the screening, record the temperature of the person and make sure that the person in the taxi maintained the necessary social distances and had the necessary sanitising equipment.

We have also proposed to the Eastern Cape that when our workers arrive at the borders of the Eastern Cape, that they be tested again. They have a similar protocol, so that there is evidence that nobody goes into the Eastern Cape. We have also asked our colleagues in the Eastern Cape that if you find anybody with high temperatures on the border, to please return them to the Western Cape. So our consideration was the health and the safety of the people of the Western Cape, the health and the safety of the people of the Eastern Cape. So those were the considerations and we have agreed in this particular regard.

I want to thank hon member Marran for agreeing that the National Government was wrong by invoking the national disaster declaration. I would also like to thank hon member Van der Westhuizen because they are absolutely right. This is a disaster and my colleague hon Minister Bredell is currently also looking into this particular matter.

I think hon member Van der Westhuizen is also correct that the National Department of Agriculture was and still is missing in action. The Director-General of the National Department of Agriculture resigned last month and when he left he said he left that Department of Thoko Didiza because the Department is dysfunctional and does not have people that have any

competence or capabilities. So Minister Maynier, the Minister of Finance, was absolutely correct yesterday during the Second Reading debate on the Adjustment Budget that the Western Cape is really on our own.

Hon colleagues, I think part of what we are seeing here is that the National Government, as the colleagues have indicated, mismanage public funds and as a result of this, the Western Cape now has to bear the brunt of these Budget cuts. Cutting the conditional grants and revoking the national disaster status of the drought will severely impact on the lives and the livelihoods of farmers, farm workers and the entire agricultural value chain. But my colleague, hon Minister Bredell, is engaging the National Department of CoGTA and the National Disaster Management Centre precisely on this particular matter, because we think it was a wrong decision and he will engage with the National Department and his Department did have some discussions already last month about this matter.

Now the Western Cape Department's point of departure is that we have to protect lives and livelihoods and for this reason the Western Cape Department has responded to COVID-19 in our sectors as follows. We immediately contributed to personal protective equipment for agri-workers by making R100 000 reusable face cloth masks available for agri-workers here in the Western Cape. We have also issued permits for farmers in line with the regulations and food production, as it was regarded as an essential service.

In addition, hon Speaker, because the National Department was missing in

action and we have received numerous questions from all over South Africa, from all other eight provinces and so we have developed a frequently asked questions for the agricultural sector, not only for the Western Cape, but for South Africa, aimed at guidance for producers and agri-workers during the lockdown because the National Department of Agriculture was missing in action and we stepped into that space.

We also made several representations to Minister Thoko Didiza for the revision of the regulations for allowing for harvesting in the table grapes, wine industries and also for the export of wine. I have written more than six letters to the National Minister and further submissions have also been made regarding the flower subsector and I want to thank hon member Van der Westhuizen who also approached me about the flower industry and I have written letters to her in this particular regard, as well as the transportation of seasonal workers across provincial boundaries, as well as within the various boundaries within the Western Cape, in other words travelling between districts.

I would also like to thank hon Premier Winde and the Minister of Transport and Public Works, Minister Bonginkosi Madikizela, because they have personally engaged with the Premier of the Eastern Cape and the Minister of Transport and Public Works from the Eastern Cape and we now have an agreed protocol for the transportation of seasonal workers – cooperative governance at work.

Also hon Speaker, we also conduct weekly virtual meetings with stakeholders to check on the issues of the sector and this helps the Department to escalate issues to National where necessary and I want to thank my Head of the Department, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa, for leading in this particular regard. We also decided to keep the veterinary export certification office in Milnerton open, with due regard to the regulations regarding safety in the workplace. That particular office is significant, hon Speaker, because agricultural export value is in the region of R5 billion here in the Western Cape.

In addition, we have partnered with Distell regarding the distribution of alcohol and sanitisers. We have also coordinated the whole of government response to the hotspots, specifically the Cape Winelands which is our strategic sector where the Department of Agriculture has also been mandated to look at the COVID-19 cases in Witzenberg and we can report that we have received a 90% recovery rate.

We have now been allocated as a Department to also deal with COVID-19 within the Cape Winelands and the current rate is an 83% recovery rate of COVID-19. We met last week, Dr Sebopetsa and myself and the Mayor of the Cape Winelands and we have set a new recovery rate for COVID-19 to 91%. We are not there yet, but we are making progress.

In addition, hon Speaker we have also established more than 1 300 food gardens as part of our One Home, One Garden campaign and the aim is to shift the focus from food relief to food security, as outlined by

Minister Fernandez yesterday during the debate on the Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Budget. This is also aimed at empowering households to produce their own food.

Hon Speaker, our post-COVID-19 agricultural response plan will strengthen our five key priorities. Firstly, education, training and research in agriculture. It will continue through this Budget our support for our farmers and farm workers, the only province in South Africa that does have a farm worker budget, farm worker programme, farm worker competition and farm worker magazine, which is the only province that cares for farm workers in South Africa.

Thirdly, is also to continue to promote rural safety. Fourthly, we will continue market access. We have set a target of 5% to grow our agricultural market exports because we know that 5% in agricultural exports in the Western Cape will lead to 90 000 new jobs here in the Western Cape. And lastly, hon Speaker, we will continue to manage climate change and its impact on agriculture.

Hon Speaker, I want to thank my Head of the Department, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa. I have met again yesterday with him around the five strategic priorities. I want to thank our Deputy Director-General, Dr Darryl Jacobs, our CFO Floris Huysamer and all my staff in the Department of Agriculture for their hard work in putting together this Adjustment Budget.

Lastly, I want to thank the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Mr Andricus van der Westhuizen, and all members of the Committee. I want to thank the parties for supporting this Budget. This is supporting agriculture, this is supporting our sustainability. I would also like to salute our Western Cape farmers, our farm workers and our producers in the Western Cape. I now move for the consideration of Vote 11 Western Cape Department of Agriculture Adjustment Budget in this House. I thank you. †Baie dankie. †Siyabonga. [Thank you.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Hon members, the time is now 12:44 to 12:45, so we will be taking a short break. In fact, I think it is rather a lunch break until half past one, which then the hon Deputy Speaker will preside. So at this stage thank you very much, hon members, this concludes the debate on this Budget Vote and the House is currently suspended. I thank you.

[Business of the House was suspended and resumed after a short break.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you hon member. I now recognise hon America.

Mr D AMERICA: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Two months after the lock-down was announced, approximately R4 million South Africans lost their income. Only 117 000 received the special Covid Emergency Grant. According to research done by Dr Nic Spull of the University of

Stellenbosch, the suffering of poor people, black women in particular, has worsened as a result of the lock-down. A staggering 47% of persons surveyed stated that their money for food dried up in April. It is by no means an exaggeration that the virus has had a devastating effect on our economy and the well-being of our people.

Instead of responding to the crisis and preparing our people and economy for recovery after the lock-down, the ANC and its cronies celebrated at the opportunity to enrich themselves yet again.

The Auditor-General, earlier this year, lamented in its report the colossal theft of public money in ANC controlled municipalities. The ANC, by way of the Secretary-General, denied that the deployment of incompetent and corrupt cadres to municipalities were ever a problem. He had the temerity to say that when black people excel, it is labelled corruption.

Hon Deputy Speaker, no vaccine can be developed as an anti-dote for corruption and lawlessness as long as the ANC is in denial and fails to act against corrupt work in its own ranks.

In contrast we have wanton corruption in ANC controlled municipalities. Municipalities across the Western Cape continue to roll out a broad range of interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in their communities, although the councils' primary responsibility is to continue to ensure that basic services, including water, sanitation, electricity and

cleaning continues. In addition, councils are doing everything within their means to assist their communities who are all struggling as a result of the COVID-19 virus and the impact thereof.

A snapshot of some of the additional measures some councillors have undertaken and which was shared with you by the Minister, includes the following; in Stellenbosch the Municipality provided a payment reprieve or holiday on property rates for three months. In addition, homeless residents in Franschoek, Stellenbosch and the Klapmuts areas were being accommodated in temporary accommodation.

Furthermore, in Stellenbosch, the Stellenbosch Unite is a collaborative aid organisation – the Action Formation – that provides social support to vulnerable communities particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaboration brings together the Municipality, Stellenbosch University, civil society in Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch Civil Advocacy Network (SCAN) representing the non-profit sector and the Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust who are the administrators.

As a first priority, Stellenbosch Unite will be supplying weekly food packages to identified vulnerable families. The Municipality has channelled R1,2 million towards this food relief programme. To date approximately 30 000 food parcels and more than 150 000 meals to communities from the Stellenbosch municipal area, in cooperation with various partners, were distributed and delivered.

Stellenbosch Municipality further expanded its financial payment relief offering and will not be charging any interest on arrears accounts for April, May and June 2020.

In the Overstrand Municipality businesses who find themselves in financial stress as a result of the lockdown and cannot pay their accounts due for March and April, may enter into an extended payment term agreement with the Municipality in order for the payments to be stretched over a period of six months.

Residential customers in that particular Municipality who find themselves in similar financial stress, as a result of the lockdown and cannot pay their accounts in full, are given an opportunity to pay their accounts over an extended period of 12 months. In addition, all tenants in the Municipality who cannot make use of the premises they may lease from the Municipality for the purpose for which it was leased, such as business premises, stalls etc. will be exempted from the payment of their rental for the months of April and May.

Swartland Municipality, as we stated earlier, is working with the private sector and the NGO sector to provide feeding schemes to homeless people and the indigent communities within the municipal boundaries. As the Minister was saying, 70 feeding schemes are supported and include the areas of Malmesbury, Moorreesburg, Goedgedacht and the Riebeek Valley.

Drakenstein Municipality, on the other hand, has lifted all water and electricity blocks, temporary shelters for the homeless have been arranged and the Municipality has provided shelter to the homeless in four different shelters across the municipal area. The homeless receive soap, water, blankets and daily meals. The Municipality, working with over 200 local NGOs, is rolling out a food aid programme. The Municipality's food aid programme is additional to the Municipality's 11 soup kitchens. There is the School Feeding Scheme, the Department of Social Development Food Hamper Project, SASSA relief and SASSA Distress Programme and work done by various faith-based and local communities within the Drakenstein area.

The Mossel Bay Municipality, hon Deputy Speaker, is providing financial assistance to all leasees of the Municipality. When it comes to water, all water that has been restricted on drip has been opened, and all prepaid and conventional electricity meters that were blocked had their restrictions lifted. The Municipality further continues to provide food to our vulnerable communities. Door-to-door checks are being done along with the Provincial Health Department in the Kwanonqaba area and other smaller areas around the region. The Municipality continues to implement the mass sanitisation of public open spaces with special focus on taxi ranks and communal toilet facilities in informal settlements.

Loud hailing of COVID-19 messages continue in all wards with "Let's Stop the Spread" preventative care messages to create awareness, and door-to-door screening is taking place in the community in all three languages, pre-

emptive in the areas where screening is being conducted.

On the other, Mr Deputy Speaker, George Municipality will not charge any interest for April 2020 on service accounts. The Council has unblocked all electricity meters from the 25th of March to allow purchase of pre-paid meters for customers. Additional sanitation facilities and water points are being provided in a number of informal settlements. Rosemoor Sports Stadium has been set up as a homeless shelter, loudhailing has been taking place in all areas as of 25 March and areas being identified on a daily basis that need to be revisited and special attention paid to them.

Approximately 23 000 meals per day are being served from 138 municipal supported home-based soup kitchens in vulnerable communities. There is at least one soup kitchen set up in every vulnerable area, five to ten kitchens in larger communities, more than 20 in the greater Thembalethu area and nearly 30 in the rural areas. Most kitchens serve two meals a day, porridge in the morning and soup, noodles and other meals based on the types of food available at around 2 p.m.

The people involved have been trained in the COVID-19 health protocols and supplied with hygiene packs and protective care, including masks, gloves and sanitisers. They have been issued with health permits and social distancing, hand washing, and other health and safety measures are implemented.

The City of Cape Town continues to provide basic services and essential

services to approximately 200 000 informal households. The City has rolled out 31 water trucks in communities where access to water is constrained. This project has seen more than 13 million litres of water delivered to date.

The City of Cape Town is also now offering guest houses and B&Bs the option of applying to change their property classification, if they need to, as a result of the COVID-19 impact which in some cases could cut rates bills in half.

The City of Cape Town has decided to reopen 19 strategically positioned ablution facilities across the Metro. This will be done in close co-operation and consultation with the City's Health and Social Development Departments. The City's Health Department and its Metro Health Service partners have conducted 70 310 screenings and over 5 000, close to 6 000 tests in the Metro.

The City is currently reprioritising water allocation budgets to unlock funds to assist struggling residents with food and sustenance provision. The City's Food Relief Programme was rolled out to all 24 sub-councils and recognised NGOs and soon it will be expanded as soon as reprioritisation of the budget has been completed.

The City of Cape Town, furthermore, hon Deputy Speaker, has assisted nearly 3 000 small/medium and micro enterprises to safely get back into business, handing over two kits to SMMEs across the Metro. The City has

supported more than 80 soup kitchens across the Metro with equipment and ingredients. These are but some of the work our councils do, from their own budgets, as a contribution towards mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

I want to thank our councils, the Western Cape Department of Local Government, the numerous NGOs as well as the enormous contribution Agri Western Cape is making to assist our communities during these difficult times.

Hon Deputy Speaker, a major focus outside of the health sector remains ongoing humanitarian and feeding initiatives to assist vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Provincial Department of Local Government, after reallocating and reprioritising some of their expenses, provided funding of R49,9 million to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. The bulk of this will go towards humanitarian aid to assist our municipalities to continue providing much needed relief in various forms, including soup kitchens, homeless shelters and food parcels. This additional allocation will assist them to continue to do so.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are not yet out of the woods. COVID-19 is still with us and it will be with us for a long time. Throughout this pandemic so far our municipalities continue to render services to our communities in the Western Cape. However, this pandemic also brought about serious financial

challenges in many of our municipalities. All of them will continue to face cash-flow and revenue challenges at a time when residential and business clients are struggling to settle their municipal accounts in full. We understand the situation many of you are in and empathise with you. National Government should make more money available to municipalities to augment their very many challenges.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Minister for his leadership and dedication to the task at hand and to the HOD, Mr Graham Paulse and his competent team, for their commitment and hard work. The Budget for this Department has increased from R313 901 000 to over R300 046 million. I ask this House to lend its support to this Budget. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. I now recognise hon Makamba-Botya.

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The Budget ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Makamba-Botya I think you have put yourself on mute, if you can just unmute yourself and start again.

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: My apologies. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The Budget Adjustment increase of R32,5 million to the Provincial Department of Local Government is unreasonable when one takes into

account that it is one of the most badly run departments in the Western Cape Provincial Government.

Under the poor leadership of hon Anton Bredell, the Department often fails at its duty to support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities in the province. The aim of municipalities under this tutelage have taken a wrong turn with them being obsessed with obtaining clean audit report outcomes rather than delivering services to poor communities. Under [Inaudible. – audio distorted.] municipality has been placed under administration from 2016 up until this day. I am glad that the hon America has actually agreed and acknowledged some of the municipalities that have performed poorly, not excluding those who have underspent, yet there are needy communities out there who are left in dire conscience.

Beaufort West and Laingsburg Municipalities are currently dysfunctional with issues such as poor governance, lack of accountability and failure to attract skilful staff. The increased Adjustment Budget of R42,8 million for transfers and subsidies to municipalities, is just going to waste as it will just be transferred with zero monitoring as to how it is utilised by these municipalities under his leadership. The ANC and DA councillors in municipalities across the province have been enriching themselves and their families with food parcels which were intended to be distributed to the benefit of the poor people in the communities. The EFF does not support the Adjustment Budget. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, while we support the Adjustment Budget in principle we are concerned about the inadequate allocation to humanitarian relief and this inadequacy is compounded by the disbursing of the allocation across various votes to different departments. The approach adopted by the Western Cape Government will simply dilute the impact of our humanitarian relief.

Now the Local Government Department gets R16 million to disperse to municipalities for humanitarian relief and the inefficiency of this type of allocation will render it meaningless. On top of that we have seen that one of the most worrying weaknesses in the Province's response to COVID-19 was the politicisation of food relief by local governments. So this R16 million is just waiting to be abused and to become a campaign tool for councillors and Mayors. Despite a Provincial Government guideline that prohibits councillors from being involved with food relief, we have seen that the Department of Local Government is reluctant to intervene directly.

So we support the vote, hon Deputy Speaker, but we need the Minister's assurance that this funding will be dispersed to ensure maximum impact and that the funding will not be abused. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Hon Christians?

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The ACDP supports the vote and we know it is a small department and the money is to be rolled out to municipalities to help the most vulnerable but, hon Deputy Speaker, the problem that I had and that is a bitter taste in all of our mouths, is how the people of Strandfontein, the homeless people of Strandfontein were treated. The Minister must assure us that it will not happen with other homeless people in the other sites.

Hon Deputy Speaker, with the small budget that the Minister has, they are assisting municipalities, they are rolling out food parcels. I want to ask the Minister to ensure that the guidelines that he sent out because of the rumours that councillors are using it for their own benefit, that that will be well-monitored, and we support the Bill. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Christians. I recognise the hon Marais. Hon Marais? Hon Marais are you there? If not, I am going to move on to hon Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. A proper budget for each ward in the Western Cape province will ensure a 50% increase in sustainable employment. Contact the Al Jama-ah for further details. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Brinkhuis. I now recognise the hon Minister, Minister Bredell.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker and if you allow me I am going to start with hon Christians and hon Herron. Thank you for your contribution and your [Inaudible.]. I take it. I can tell you now that with the R16,2 million we had to step in very quickly and to be honest, it was the failure of SASSA who closed their offices. Municipalities were in dire straits at that stage and we had to feed people and we did not have a lot of time.

I have personally got a huge problem with the politicising of food parcels. I think it is an insult if any politician or any public representative gives a person a food parcel and takes a photo because people are poor. In itself, I think it is inhumane and it is just wrong to take photos and try and build a profile when you are handing out food parcels.

We must just be clear on the guidelines for the money that we can give to municipalities. We cannot instruct them what to do with their own money or with the municipality's budget and how they deal with that but the money that we allocated, we will see to it and will monitor it very closely. Therefore we have also dismantled some of the responsibility to the districts and given them funding to help us to monitor the spending of this money because it is really important that we do get it to the right people.

To hon member Botya, good financial management: I am not ashamed to be obsessed about that because if we do not get good financial management

going, we will never get to service delivery. The ANC's answer to service delivery is you steal everything and then you just stand up and shout and hope the poor will still follow you. We cannot do that, we need to have good financial management, we need proper management in place to get service delivery to ...

Mr P MARRAN One of your councillors has been found guilty of corruption ... [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order, hon member.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: To the Chairperson, Mr America, thank you very much for your leadership. Then to hon member Smith, I have got a lot to say there because of the failure of National Government that puts a lot of pressure on all of us and I think we need to clear the air on some of these issues.

I have never been involved in trying to destabilise any councils. To get good proper discipline in a council, I will stand for that, I said it from day one and let me talk to the things that you and hon Dugmore are running with. First of all, you run with an illegal tape. It is illegal to tape anybody, saying that ...

Mr P MARRAN: [Inaudible.] speak about tapes, you must speak about the budget.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Marran, please!

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: I will tell you, I will say it on any public platform. I was never ashamed of anything I said. I do not mind because the truth will speak for itself, but you have done another illegal thing and part of that is that you cut the tape. You only selectively played 20 seconds out of a tape of a one-and-a-half-hour meeting ... [Interjection.]

Mr P MARRAN: Speak about the budget.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: So that will come. I answered to what he has mentioned. Now what has happened in that tape, and I need to state it on the record, you see because that is why they cut tapes selectively. We started that meeting with the DA caucus, it was a DA meeting, it was not any other meeting. It was a DA meeting because we expect our public reps to serve the people and if they fail in that we will tell them that and we will hold them accountable. That is what the DA is all about. That is one of the big differences between the DA and the ANC and you will see how he now jumps on the shoulders of Matzikama, but he will be – I will correct that statement of his now.

What had happened in Oudtshoorn that links to that meeting was that I went there as the DA Chairperson and I told them the DA caucus is divided. A

caucus that is divided cannot deliver services, secondly that DA caucus and the administration, there was a break in relationship between them. Their CFO resigned, their engineer resigned, and the municipal manager was put on suspended leave. That and my opinion to save that situation will always be let us put you under administration, let us get a competent team in here, let's get the politicians aside and let us move forward because our ...

Mr P MARRAN: And build the DA brand.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Marran!

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ... and that is that. That is how we build and that is how I will build the DA brand because I owe it, not to anybody else but to the people.

Hon Chairperson, on the George thing I will categorically state that I have never targeted Trevor Botha or Melvin Naik. Personally I like the two individuals. I went to those people and told them and to that caucus and they will attest to that, that they are not guilty until being found guilty. After that we received three forensic reports and I dare the hon member Smith, who is so clever with his comments, to go and read those reports and then you come out with your judgement on that. If there is any sign of corruption then we must hold people accountable. They must defend themselves. I do not mind if I get investigated and I will prove my innocence.

But we have got to hold the higher moral ground and we need to clamp down on any form of corruption and with the ANC councillors, now all of a sudden because some of them are under threat, he jumps on it and says that I sent the SIU to Matzikama. Well, it is his own president, the ANC President, Cyril Ramaphosa, who sent them. Now write to him and tell him to back off. I am glad they walked in there and if the ANC has got nothing to hide, they must prove it. Prove it and we will see what is going to come out of that because like in any corrupt organisation ... [Interjection] their own buddies, their own cadres turn on them.

They are busy turning on them, they turned into whistle-blowers and we, as a Department, will follow through, irrespective of the opinion of hon Dugmore and hon Smith. They can protect the corrupt people in the system. We will not. We will do anything possible to get them out of the system. Therefore I will call on the National Government to enhance and to strengthen the capacity in the wards, to strengthen the capacity in the public prosecuting offices. I personally think we need a special court to get rid of all the corrupt politicians. So we will, and I will not back off from that statement. So thank you, hon Smith for opening ... [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Point of order, point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore, you need to wait, I have not recognised you. One minute please. Hon Dugmore, you have the hand

function which you can use rather than shouting over the microphone.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Okay.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Apart from your own colleague, hon Marran shouting at the same time. So hon Dugmore what is your point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, a slightly less aggression would indicate your neutrality but ...
[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure, the way you were shouting at me.

An HON MEMBER: Exactly!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: My point of order is to ask whether the MEC is prepared to accept a question?

Ms N D NKONDLO: The face must show [Inaudible.].

Mr P MARRAN: He will not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Nkondlo, please. Hon Bredell I am listening.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Yes, I will take the question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There you go hon Dugmore, you have your question, ask your question.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. I would like to ask MEC Bredell whether he is prepared to go on the record today and announce the Section 106 investigation into the conduct of the George CFO who has been found guilty by an internal disciplinary process as well as the Mayco member for finance in regard to the Old Mutual investment in George, a 106 investigation?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister?

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Dugmore, that is what the 106 investigation is. The CFO was found guilty, he was fired, he is out of the system. Why must we investigate him? But, saying that, the Hawks are busy investigating that whole issue. It is with the Hawks and with SAPS and I can get you the numbers, so why must we throw money now into that investigation?

Our forensic investigations speak to three other matters that the Hawks did not investigate, so we await that report and the sad part of all of this, is that the Hawks struggle with capacity. The sooner we can build the capacity in

the wards, the quicker the Public Prosecuting Authority can determine people's guilt or innocence and then move forward.

But I also want to tell the hon Smith that you must stop trying to now shift the blame to Saldahna and the Berg River. If you know of any corruption, you are obliged to go and lay a case at the police station, you are obliged. Give us the information, let us investigate it because I do not put any money on a party ticket. If they are guilty, they will pay the price because at the end of the day, we need to serve the people.

On the electricity matter, the hon [Inaudible. – connection lost.]

Mr P MARRAN: I am not your MEC.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ... said that the electricity tariffs are going up and up and they are going to be so high. The question is why? It is because of the ANC mismanagement, using Eskom to loot this country, that is why we have got the Zondo Commission. The Zondo Commission does not give us any results. They have spent billions on the Zondo Commission already just to determine who in the ANC got more than the other cadre.

Mr P MARRAN: How many millions?

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ... [Inaudible. – connection lost.] see when the hon Dugmore and the hon Smith start any public meeting I have got some advice for you, start by apologising to the people for looting this country and managing it into bankruptcy ... [Interjection.]

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: Hon Speaker ...

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ... [Inaudible.] I thank you for the support.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, just one minute and hon Makamba-Botya I see your hand is up. What is your point of order?

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. My point of order, in fact I raised my hand before the Minister ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, you are absolutely right.

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: My point of order: I just want to find out, is it parliamentary to have our time wasted listening to the dirty laundry and the gossip between the ANC and the DA. I think we need some kind of respect and if there are any legal matters of corruption between the two parties, that can be raised on a different platform. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Makamba-Botya, that is not a point of order, but I have heard you. Hon Minister, have you concluded?

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. That concludes the debate on this Vote. I now call on the Secretary to read the Sixth Order of the Day. Please lower your hand hon Botha.

The SECRETARY: Vote 10 – Transport and Public Works – Western Cape Adjustment Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill (2020/2021 Financial year).

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Secretary. I recognise the hon Minister, Minister Madikizela. Minister, just check that your mic is on. Are you there, Minister?

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Hon Deputy Speaker, when I presented the usual Adjustment Budget for the Department of Transport and Public Works in December of last year and referred to the broad ranging role which this Department plays in the overall service delivery by the Western Cape Government to the residents of this province, I had no idea of the extent to which that role would be tested and expanded by the events of recent months. As Government, we have been called upon to

undertake and perform functions which even six months ago would not have been included in existing mandates.

And what is more, hon Deputy Speaker, these new functions have had to be performed in very limited timeframes and against a background of increasing infections, intensive care admissions and sadly the lives that were lost. It is now a simple statement of fact that the virus has laid bare the many severe inequalities in our country, inequalities which will not disappear as and when the pandemic comes to a point where some of the more extreme measures which have had to be taken, can be eased. The economic damage has been huge and will be long lasting as will be the impact of unemployment and job losses on families and communities. More and more people are coming to understand that it is not simply a matter of waiting the storm out until things return to normal.

The expression “new normal” has in a very short time become overused but remains nevertheless true. However, hon Deputy Speaker, the pandemic has also acted as a catalyst and forced us to look at many things in new ways. It has encouraged structures into a situation in which co-operation is the only way in which they can move forward. It has furthered the development, implementation and use of technology often providing new solutions to long-standing challenges.

Yesterday, in the Second Reading debate I highlighted the enhanced co-operative arrangements between my Department and the minibus taxis

industry to the advantage of both parties, as well as the benefit of so many of our frontline health workers. Here too, technology has played a significant role in allowing electronic pre-booking of transport and the monitoring and reporting of hygiene standards.

Hon Deputy Speaker, one of the major changes set out in this First Adjusted Estimate of Vote 10 is the amount of R365 million for the hiring and fit-out of venues and facilities and purchasing of associated services for quarantine and isolation purposes as a key component of the health strategy response to COVID-19. What does this allocation managed by my Department mean in practical terms in the second half of June as the pandemic moved towards the peak?

4672 beds in 15 Government and 29 private fully functional facilities within the Metro and across the province. These facilities were fully supported by all necessary services. 9670 beds ready to be activated in 14 Government and 168 private facilities within the Metro and across the province, should the need arise.

The identification, inspection, evaluating and activating of these facilities across the province in line with the needs in different districts was a massive exercise carried out by dedicated staff members of my Department and I do want to take this opportunity and really thank my dedicated team under the leadership of HOD Gooch.

The careful use of these facilities in conjunction with the Red Dot taxi service made it possible to move people into facilities appropriate to the needs of their stage of treatment according to relevant Department of Health protocols. It is important that we bear in the mind what the figures which we are talking about mean in real terms.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is not my intention to deal with all the details of the First Adjustment Budget figures. These are available to the members in the First Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure for 2020 as I tabled. I do however want to highlight some of these as follows:

The Main Appropriation of Vote 10 increases by R126 472 000 and is made up of the following:

- Unforeseen and unavoidable - R400 million - an additional allocation to respond to the Covid pandemic consisting of R356 million for quarantine and isolation as described above, and R44 million for the provision of the Red Dot service.
- Other adjustments - R273 528 000 - including a reduction of R161 654 000 in the national allocation of the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant due to the reduced fiscal framework.
- Realignment of Provincial Budget - R327 874 000 to respond to COVID-19 including the following:

R74 641 000 budget reduction on compensation of employees and operational costs over all the programme on the Vote.

Programme 2 - Public Works Infrastructure - R16 672 000 Budget reduction on maintenance of general infrastructure as part of the provincial response to COVID-19.

Programme 3 - Transport Infrastructure - R87 687 000 Budget reduction on road maintenance. R111 874 000 Budget reduction on the Wingfield and Refinery Interchange projects.

Provincial funding - R216 million including the following:

- Programme 1 – Administration - R72 000 000 to provide for personal protective equipment for departmental staff and for the integrated team at 24/7 roadblocks. R1 million for operational costs such as computer equipment and lights for roadblocks.
- Programme 2 – Public Works Infrastructure - R10 million for sanitisation and decontamination of office accommodation and fit-out of Western Cape Government accommodation in terms of COVID-19 requirements.
- Programme 3 – Transport Infrastructure - R103 million for the estimated impact of contractual liabilities due to COVID-19 and lockdown regulations on Transport infrastructure.
- Programme 4 – Transport Operations is R31 million.

R1 million for increased operational costs and software development for the development of applications to communicate with the public and transport industry.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in drawing to a close I would like to focus briefly on the work of a group of dedicated Western Cape Government employees. In many ways front-line workers in their own right, I am talking here about the officers in our Provincial Traffic Service who have continued to render excellent work throughout the pandemic, often on crowded main links and during congestion which had to be very high risk.

During the period 1 April to 30 June, coinciding with the first three months of the lockdown, a total of 2 386 integrated roadblocks, vehicle checkpoints and speed operations were conducted across the Western Cape and 145 503 vehicles were stopped and checked. 1 213 speeding offences were recorded and 11 545 fines worth R16 189 600 were issued for various traffic violations ranging from driver to vehicle fitness.

In the period 11 vehicles were impounded and 125 vehicles were discontinued for being unroadworthy. A total of 144 crashes and 163 road fatalities were recorded in the period. This presents an overall 59% reduction on these figures for the same period last year, and of course we are under no illusion to make this comparison because we know that for the better part of this period we were under lockdown.

Our traffic officers will continue their planned 24/7 operations across the province to keep our road network safe, safeguard the lives of innocent road users and stringently enforce the Disaster Management Act Regulations.

It is not surprising that during this period, some of our officers have fallen ill and have tested positive. We wish them all a speedy recovery and thank them for their dedicated and selfless service in the best interests of our road users.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, while dealing with the massive contribution made by our Traffic Services, to acknowledge the impending retirement tomorrow of Chief Kenny Africa after a very long and distinguished career of 46 years in Traffic Management and Enforcement. In many ways Kenny Africa is a legend highly regarded by many. We wish him everything of the best and record our heartfelt thanks for a job well done in the service of others. As he retires from tomorrow, I wish him well and may he spend his time with the family wisely. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, your mic is muted. Still muted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, I switch it off otherwise the echo is too great. My apologies. I recognise hon Mvimbi, are you there?

Mr L MVIMBI: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. The President declared a national lockdown four months ago to prepare our state machinery and our resources, particularly the public healthcare system, to be ready for the peak of COVID-19 infection.

This Department was at the centre of the Provincial Government's response to this health emergency. It played a role in the building of temporary field hospitals and the testing and screening facility for the development of health. R1,8 billion was allocated to the Department of Health for this purpose as well as for additional bed capacity. R356 million was allocated to this Department for the hiring and fit-out of venues and facilities and the purchasing of associated services for quarantine and isolation purposes.

Such investment presented economic opportunities for some. An area of concern is that there is no social economic recovery reprioritisation plan in this Budget and therefore it does not look to address the challenges exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including economic disparities. The recovery plan must talk to economic recovery in the form of economic transformation and economic restructuring. The structure of the market economy has once again failed to rescue the poor from the trappings of poverty.

At the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure it was disclosed that three hotels in the City of Cape Town were used to quarantine 545 people for two weeks at a cost of R8,35 million. Township businesses

such as B&Bs, which are suitable for quarantine and isolation, have been overlooked in favour of well-established businesses.

The Province has activated 44 quarantine and isolation facilities with 4 842 beds available at an average cost of R770 per bed, per night in private facilities such as hotels and B&Bs and pays Government-owned facilities about R350.

In May, the Provincial Department of Public Works and Infrastructure claimed that a total of 172 facilities with a capacity to allow 21 316 beds were identified in the Western Cape. Of these, 30 were compliant with 3 824 beds available and only nine of these were activated. Surely we have to be concerned about these grossly exorbitant prices for quarantine and isolation facilities when this Department owns hundreds of facilities that could have been utilised for the purpose. Utilising our public facilities would allow the Government to save costs that could be used for other pressing priorities.

This Department is supposed to play an active role in other aspects of the fight against COVID-19 such as the Transport Operation Programme which has been allocated R44 million for the provision of Red Dot services to transport public sector healthcare workers and members of the public to quarantine and isolation services. What has also been striking in this service is that while it was also supposed to transport both health workers and members of the public, it seems to be only concentrating on members of the public and a little bit less on healthcare workers.

In June the MEC claimed that since its launch on 18 May, the Red Dot taxi service, with a fleet of 200 dedicated minibuses, transported approximately 12 000 healthcare workers over 150 000 kilometres, servicing 15 healthcare facilities across the City of Cape Town. When I happened to enquire about the Red Dot services, especially in the Central Karoo District where the Central Karoo has only been allocated one vehicle, the response was that there was only one taxi.

So far that taxi has only transported eight patients and what about the healthcare workers? While 1 100 passengers have been transported to quarantine and isolation facilities across the province, we have to raise concerns regarding the centralisation of the first component in the Cape Metro. The insufficient and inadequate distribution of the Red Dot taxis to other regions in the province must be addressed immediately.

The Department has played a central role in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in public transport. It has to play a central role in the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in public transport. The Department has a R71 million Budget for PPE for departmental staff and integrated 24/7 roadblocks including SADAF, SANDF and SAPS personnel. A further R10 million is earmarked for sanitation and decontamination of office accommodation and fit-out of Western Cape Government. In this Budget there is no provision for safety measures in public transport. Who is responsible for the sanitation of taxis and taxi ranks? What about PPEs for public transport drivers?

The Eastern Cape Government often blames the Western Cape for the high infection rate in the province as it correctly claimed that many people have left the province undetected, unscreened and with unverified permits. A glance at this Budget shows the attitude of this Government towards public transport systems, especially taxis. During a period in which the taxi industry has been hard hit by the nationwide lockdown and the subsequent regulations, this Government could not even make special provision to subsidise the taxi industry in the Adjustment Budget. The R6 million reduction of the Rail Enforcement Unit is another example of how this Government undervalues public transport. We call for this R6 million to be reallocated towards to COVID-19 related programmes for the taxi industry.

Above I mentioned that 172 facilities have been considered and only nine were activated for the purpose of quarantine and isolation. The process of dedensification of densely populated areas have failed due to weak and ineffective leadership, especially in both the Department of Transport and Public Works because when we raise the issue of dedensification in the Portfolio Committee of Transport and Public Works their response will be, no, it is a human settlement responsibility.

In this regard the remaining Government property should be used for the purposes of dedensification. COVID-19 is forcing us to address the structural challenges that we have ignored for decades. It is forcing ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: [Inaudible.] hon member.

Mr L L MVIMBI: ... this Government to address the legacy of apartheid spatial planning. This Budget presented an opportunity to address this real challenge ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr L L MVIMBI: ... in the province and the MEC seems to have failed in this regard. It is in this regard that we ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Your time is up.

Mr L L MVIMBI: ... do not support the Vote.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr L L MVIMBI: Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I now recognise hon Mitchell.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I rise today to make a contribution to the Western Cape COVID-19 Special Adjustment Budget. In particular, a contribution to Vote 10, the Department of Transport and Public Works which aims to tirelessly pursue the delivery of

infrastructure that is inclusive, safe and technologically relevant, that seeks to heal, skill, integrate, connect, link and empower every citizen in the Western Cape driven by passion, ethics and steadfast commitment to the environment and people as the cornerstone.

Hon Deputy Speaker, whilst the COVID-19 pandemic is undeniably the pre-eminent crisis of our time and one which knows no boundaries, the Department, now more than ever, remains true to its commitment; that is keeping the safety and best interest of the residents of the Western Cape at the forefront of the mind.

When a crisis strikes, one would hope that leaders would lead with humanity. One would hope that the vulnerable citizens would be protected, and their interest would be front and centre of those who are elected to represent them. One would hope that decisive and ethical leadership would be the compass to direct the very nation that entrusted those elected to do so.

Hon Deputy Speaker, with the first announcement of the initial 21-day lockdown declared by the President, South Africans were scared and unsettled but remained committed to beating this pandemic and willingly complied with the rules and regulations. We said yes to the very rules proposed and gazetted because as a nation we came together, we looked beyond our different ideologies and we looked ahead because we knew that together we could, and we would beat this pandemic.

Hon Deputy Speaker, four months later, we are here today to vote in the COVID-19 Budget in a province where we have leaders, both politically and administratively, who when this crisis struck, led with humanity and proposed the adjustments to the current Budget to protect and serve the interests of the citizens of this province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, while it is deeply regrettable that the National Fiscal Framework has reduced our Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant allocation by over R161 million, it must be pointed out that once again, when National leaves us wanting, the Province steps up in its support. Through prudent financial management and cost containment measures, the Provincial Department has invoked Section 25 of the PFMA, allowing for emergency expenditure to the value of R400 million. This will support the good work already in progress to beat Covid on the frontlines.

We further welcome the increase of over R350 million for public works infrastructure at a time when containing transmission of the pandemic is so vital. These funds directly relate to the hiring of venues and kitting out of facilities for quarantine and isolation purposes so that those who are unable to safely self-isolate have support from this Provincial Government to do so.

Hon Deputy Speaker, with these adjustments, I would like to pause and focus on the success and the impact the Red Dot service had during this time. Because this Government, hon Deputy Speaker, protects both lives and livelihoods, 200 minibus taxis were fitted with protective screens as part of

the dedicated service for the transport of healthcare workers and individuals to and from quarantine and isolation sites. This comprehensive immediate action came in the wake of a potential national taxi strike because quite frankly, the National Government, hon Deputy Speaker, had no plan or let me rephrase, a lack of political will and leadership to save both lives and livelihoods with a sustainable responsive and adaptable action plan.

I therefore welcome the R44 million increase for transport operations which will see to it that the Red Dot service is sustained. Perhaps, hon Deputy Speaker, if Cabinet was less preoccupied with internal political factions and battles and fights for personal careers, we would have seen a nationwide service just like the Red Dot. Yet the Western Cape was the first to react in this way, through a perfect example of a whole of government and society approach, led by MEC Madikizela in his extensive consultation with the taxi industry, private sector and through inter-departmental relations.

In this we note that the Western Cape clearly shows that no department can act in isolation. This is not a time for working in silos. We have to innovate, think out of the proverbial box and ensure that every Minister, every official, with the support of stakeholders, roll up their sleeves to tackle these unparalleled challenges.

Hon Deputy Speaker, Minister Madikizela touched on it and it has been widely reported on the strides made to strengthen the relationships with the taxi industry and leaders. This is by no means a small victory. The only

province which did not see a taxi strike, due to the draconian and dictatorial regulations, was the Western Cape. This is no small achievement.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister and HOD for heeding the call and leading with humanity in the interests of the citizens of this province. We trust that as we emerge from this pandemic, the Department would look at building on the success of this initiative going forward.

Hon Deputy Speaker, without a shadow of a doubt, the Western Cape demonstrates excellence in Transport and Public Works leadership. Where the ANC governs, we see R2,8 billion spent on a plan for buses in Rustenberg in the North West that has never seen the light of day.

The Go-Durban Bus Plan in KZN, after seven years, has but one transport corridor though nine ought to be in place by now. In the Free State, over R800 million was spent on a bus service that has led to buses been parked most likely for the next ten years. And on a national level, Minister Mbalula had no meaningful engagement on the violence related to truck drivers, the exploitation of foreign drivers, and he oversees a R2,5 billion recklessly spent on e-Tolls.

Instead of providing us with clear, workable and rational transport regulations during the lockdown, the National Minister has flip-flopped on numerous occasions sending vastly mixed signals to the industry leaders and commuters. Perhaps, hon Deputy Speaker, it is his confusion in the

uncertainty of whether he should be taking orders from President Ramaphosa or Minister Dlamini Zuma. But nevertheless, it is the resident who pays the ultimate price.

Yes, Deputy Speaker, while the DA delivers a budget to beat COVID-19 in the Western Cape, Pretoria uses this crisis to line the pockets of cadres and comrades. We see, and we will continue to see, in the Western Cape that there will be major breakthroughs in negotiations with taxi industry leaders and unions.

We will see zero increases in taxi fares in this province, supporting the safe commute of residents. We will see outstanding provincial border support and maintenance through lockdown and beyond. We will see innovation through marking and IT solutions to tackle illegal operators and we will continue to see world class facilities, including the 44 activated quarantine and isolation facilities with over 4 600 beds available.

In conclusion, allow me the opportunity to echo the Minister's thanks and gratitude to the Traffic Chief, Mr Kenny Africa, for his immense contribution over a 46-year career. Mr Africa, on behalf of the Democratic Alliance, we wish you well as you will officially be retiring tomorrow. And finally, but not least, the HOD Ms Gooch and the entire team who are at the forefront of delivery every single day to serve the citizens of this province. Thank you very much.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I therefore express my sincere conviction that we do indeed have a budget to beat COVID-19 in this province. We are on course to see the residents of the Western Cape through these turbulent times. We are, together, going to charter a safer future with opportunity, a safety net for those who need it most and the political will and leadership that operates in the best interests of the next generation and not the next election. Hon Deputy Speaker, I am proud to say that the DA supports Vote 10, Transport and Public Works. I thank you.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hear-hear!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Mitchell. I recognise hon Xego.

Mr M XEGO: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The Department's mandate – it is tasked with the massive job of constructing and maintaining roads, educational and health facilities, including general buildings within the province. Having said that, what is concerning is that the majority of public schools in townships and disadvantaged communities are continually relying on mobile classroom structures in the recent times. It is indeed true that these structures provide quick fix aid in terms of accommodating more learners in public schools.

However, they should not be treated as long term solutions of our schools as they have the potential to threaten lives and endanger the lives of teachers as

well as learners. This was the case at the beginning of this month, at Nomzamo High School in Strand, when classrooms and toilet structures were flattened by strong winds, as well as the floods that were experienced at Leiden Avenue Primary School in Delft.

Furthermore, lack of proper maintenance of fencing in public schools by the Department added to high crimes and concentration in the schools and anybody can just walk in and harm or rob the learners and teachers, because these schools have dilapidated infrastructure. Moreover, public schools in poor communities often lack adequate physical infrastructure to accommodate learners and teachers with disabilities.

The Department also appears to have neglected its duty to see to it that the Transport Industry complies with COVID-19 health and safety protocols, especially when it comes to minibus taxis. The continuing violence of taxi owners and drivers has seen the serious butchering of transport users, as well as members of the public, especially in Paarl, Bellville, Delft and other areas and it is surely seen as less interesting to the Minister and his Department because black lives do not matter. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, your time has expired. Thank you very much. I recognise hon Herron.

Mr B N HERRON: Hon Deputy Speaker, we support the Vote. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Herron. Hon Christians?

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The ACDP supports the Budget but needs to ask a question to the Minister. Now that the National Minister of Transport has announced that taxis can fill 100% occupancy, people are concerned when they stand in the queue to get into a taxi, there is a 1 metre gap. When they get out there is a 1 metre gap, but in the taxi itself, it is packed and it is cramped and does that not defeat the purpose of all the money being rolled out for social distancing, PPE's, and the now National Minister comes and says we can fill the taxis 100%? People are concerned and what is his Department doing to talk to taxi owners to ensure that our people are safe going to work? I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Christians. I think hon Marais has left, as far as I understand. Hon Brinkhuis. Hon Brinkhuis, are you there? Nope. Then we will move over to hon Minister Madikizela.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker and thank you very much to all the colleagues who have participated in this. I want to react quickly to a couple of things that were mentioned by the members.

Member Mvimbi, regarding the issue of the use of the hotels, I find it surprising because most of the facilities that we used were our own facilities

and the use of hotels in order to partner with the private sector is not something that should be frowned upon, because there is nothing wrong with it. In fact, when we anticipated that we might need more accommodation, the National Government, and the Department of Public Works, had already engaged some of the hotels so that we could partner with them.

So, if indeed we needed more accommodation that could be used, which is ready to complement what we already had – I see nothing wrong in a partnership with those, but I do want to put it on record that most of the facilities that we used were our own, which were converted. So it is not necessarily true that most of them were hotels.

Also, on the issue of the services provided in terms of Red Dot, I find it surprising. I am not sure whether I heard you correctly, because you are saying that instead of transporting health workers we are now transporting members of the public.

Now, sir, the number of people that are transported and the health workers that are transported are far more than the public, which is the people that are transported to quarantine and isolation sites. As I said yesterday, we provided 36 000 healthcare worker trips and when we started this service, we started with only five Health facilities. It is now being used by 25 Health facilities and in all these areas we are transporting healthcare workers. So, your assertion that we are transporting the public more than health workers is

wrong. As I said, we are transporting about 720 passengers per day. So, those are ... [Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI: Hon Deputy Speaker ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, if you could just wait a minute. I see there is a point of order. Hon Mvimbi, what is your point of order?

Mr L L MVIMBI: I think the Minister did not get my point clear. I made an example about ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mvimbi, that is not a point of order. That is not a point of order, hon Mvimbi.

An HON MEMBER: It is not a point of order.

Mr L L MVIMBI: No, because he is answering me incorrectly. He is not giving me the right answer because he got the question wrong.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. But I cannot allow you time to clarify your question to him. I can just ask if he chooses to answer you in the way that you would like. I do not have any jurisdiction to force him to do so. Hon Minister?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, can I raise on a point of order? My hand is up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, hon Sayed. Sorry, yes, I see you.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, this situation would not have arisen had the hon MEC spoken through you, hon Deputy Speaker. So, could you please call the hon MEC to order that he must not address the hon Mvimbi directly. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Sayed. Hon Minister, if you could talk through me. You may proceed.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Hon Deputy Speaker, on the issue of the Central Karoo where the member is complaining, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, that only one vehicle was despatched there, but of course, you can only issue the number of vehicles depending on the demand. The Central Karoo has five cases for example. On what basis then do you decide to despatch a number of vehicles when there is no demand? This service ... [Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI: What about health workers?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order, hon Mvimbi. You may not interject, please.

An HON MEMBER: Beaufort West has got 204 cases.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Now, this service is provided when the need arises and as I said, we started with five here and we are now providing 25 facilities as and when the need arises and people need it in partnership with Manyano, which is the taxi industry. It is being provided. So I think I must make that point very clear that it is provided where it is needed, whether by health workers, through the partnership with the taxi industry or by people who must be taken to quarantine and isolation sites.

Mr L L MVIMBI: So there are eight health workers in Central Karoo?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No interjecting. Hon Mvimbi, please can you put your microphone on mute. Officials, if you can please mute everybody. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Again, on the issue of the support of the taxi industry. I just find that bizarre. I do not think there is any province that supported the taxi industry like this province, and he is saying that we must use that R6 million to support the taxi industry. Now, I must make this very clear to the member that the issue of subsidising the taxi industry is an issue that is led nationally. We have been talking about it for some time, but for your information, we have said it from the word go,

way before the impasse between the taxi industry and the Department of Transport nationally.

We made a proposal, as the Western Cape. We call it Blue Dot. We have a Red Dot in terms of those taxis but we made a proposal that we call Blue Dot, where we suggested that, given the fact that our grants that we were supposed to use; Public Transport Network Grant for example, your PTOG (Public Transport Operations Grant), your Equitable Share; given the fact that those grants were not used in a number of projects because of lockdown, we suggested that let us structure them so that in order for the taxi industry to comply, when we say to them load 70% we then meet them halfway by paying them the 30%, so that we avoid the situation that resulted in the impasse.

We made that proposal and the taxi industry itself in this province can tell you that the partnership that they have with us is the reason why they decided not to increase the taxi fares when other provinces were pushing to increase the taxi fares. I can go on and on. It is the reason why they decided they will not embark on a strike when other provinces were threatening to strike. So, any assertion from someone who is saying that we are not supporting the taxi industry is very, very wrong.

Now, the issue of the Eastern Cape; again, you have been pushing the issue even in the House, because you want me to assume a responsibility that is not mine. I am not responsible for testing people. That is the responsibility of the Department of Health. There was this mad idea which resulted in a very

unfortunate situation when you travel to Eastern Cape, where people were complaining on a regular basis that they are stopped and they spend days on the road in a long queue, because there was an insistence that they must be tested, when we knew that the tests did not take less than 48 hours then and it ended up taking more than a week to two.

Now, surely you could not expect people to wait there for a week while they are waiting for their test results. And by the way, the protocols around tests, that is something that is led by the National Minister of Health and it is the National Minister of Health who called that province into order – that you cannot do what you are doing because it was against the protocols that had to be followed in terms of that Department.

So, I do want to say that the safety measures, because this is the question that was also asked by member Christians; we are engaging the taxi industry on a regular basis. In fact, I meet with the leadership of the taxi industry because the issue of compliance is something that must be done by Government, working together with the leadership of the taxi industry. Not only the taxi industry, but the transport industry. I am always out there. When I receive a complaint that a particular taxi rank is not complying, I go there personally, engage the leadership of that taxi rank and make sure that people understand the importance of complying with the regulations. So it is something that I do on a regular basis.

To the Chairperson, member Mitchell, I want to thank you very much for your support and leadership and I think you have really hit the nail right on the head when you spoke about the number of issues and the services that are provided by this Department, especially during this pandemic to make sure that we really minimise the impact. And as you said, the HOD and the team really did a sterling job in making sure that we secure the facilities.

By the way, we were the only province that did what it was supposed to do in terms of making sure that there are enough facilities, whether it is isolation, whether it is quarantine, whether it is field hospital beds. And as I am talking to you now, despite the concern that was there before, all the activated quarantine and isolation sites are being utilised and there are those who are on standby so that if we need to activate them, we will be able to that instantly. But we are plateauing now, unless there is a second wave. We do not believe that it will get there but we made enough preparations and partnerships with the Department of Health to make sure that we have enough sites so that we do not find ourselves in a situation that we see in other provinces.

Now, member Xego, everything that you raised here has nothing to do with the Adjustment that we are talking about here today. When you raise the issue around the mandate of this Department, of course we know what the mandate of this Department is, but you raise many issues that have nothing to do with the Adjustment that we are here to present. [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, if you can just wait one minute. Hon Sayed, I recognise you. What is your point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, yet again the MEC now is speaking directly to member Xego. I do not want to sound like a stuck record on this issue, but it is the procedure. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Sayed. I recognise you, hon Minister. You must talk through the Chair.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. As I wrap up, and again I am not sure where people live. Member Xego, I do not have to be responding to you on this because it has got nothing to do with the Budget, but again ... [Interjection.]

The CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Through the Chair. Through the Chair.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS: You are raising, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, the issue that is factually incorrect because you want to believe in the figment of your imagination what you have always believed, that this Government does not care about black people. I engage the leaders of the taxi industry on a regular basis about taxi violence. I had another meeting last week. 97 people have been arrested already. 43 cases are on the court roll.

So, I do not know what you are talking about when you are saying we are not paying attention to this. Thank you very much to member Herron and member Christians for the support and of course, the issue of 100% now member Christians, as you said. I am making sure because we have communicated to the public that there is a number that we have given to the public so that they can complain when the taxi drivers are not complying. We look at all those complaints and visit all the ranks where the cases of non-compliance are high, and I make sure that they engage the leadership in those areas. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. That concludes Vote 10. We now move over, and I will ask the Secretary to read the final order of the day. Mr Secretary.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 5 – Education – Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill (2020/21 Financial Year) [B4 - 2020].

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

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. This Special Adjustment Budget has been made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic which, together with the ongoing downward spiral of the economy over the last number of years, is putting immense pressure on our

Department. We have been extremely good at making every cent count. So, before I mention specifics, I will start off with some of the great work that has been done by the WCED so far, in responding to the virus in the face of increasing fiscal pressures.

Exactly one month before a case of Coronavirus was reported in South Africa, S G [Inaudible.] sent his first of many letters to all principals and parents. He alerted them to the spread of the virus overseas, providing principal posters for schools to display, explaining the important hygiene measures that learners and indeed everyone should follow to stop the spread. This set the tone for the consistent support in communication the Department would provide to schools.

Just over a month later the pandemic was a reality in South Africa and the President closed the schools for an extended holiday. The Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute has developed an online course for teachers, covering modules such as the DIY Home Classroom, teaching strategies, finding and creating digital content and sharing platforms. I must commend our teachers on the innovative methods that many of them have come up with in order to support their classes remotely, particularly for those learners who could only access low data usage platforms like WhatsApp and for sharing these methods with other teachers.

We, of course, recognise that many learners in our province do not have access to the internet or mobile data at home. As soon as the directions were

gazetted by the National Government, stating that educational sites should be zero rated, I wrote to the major data providers asking them to implement this decision. With assistance from them and colleagues in the Department of Economic Development, the WCED e-Portal along with other WCED websites have been zero-rated, as have many of the partner sites we are linked to. The WCED is constantly looking at ways to minimize the costs to our users of those sites that have a cost element.

Work packs were also distributed to learners by some of the schools participating in our emergency school feeding program, a program which was made necessary by the spectacular failure of the National Government to provide nutritional support to its citizens. The DEE said that the National Department of Social Development and SASSA would step in to support vulnerable children who would not have access to the NSNP during the lockdown, but this simply did not happen. Because the Western Cape Government is a caring government, our Provincial Treasury allocated emergency funds to humanitarian relief including R18 million to the WCED to serve take-away meals at school, which is included in this Adjustment Appropriation.

At the same time, the Department was looking ahead and planning for what would be required for schools to reopen safely. We developed detailed guidelines so that no school would be left wondering what to do when reopening. This included what to do if a staff member or learner tested positive, how school transport and hospitals should implement safety

measures; what options are available for parents who wish to keep their children at home; measures for staff and learners with high risk co-morbidities; available psycho-social support for staff and learners and a host of other topics.

This helps to partially overcome the challenge caused by the National Department's comedy of errors in reopening schools. Any member of the public can go onto our website and read the 14 different guideline documents in three languages, to see exactly what our schools have been advised by health experts to do. In addition, we provided every school with liquid soap and hand sanitiser, cleaning and disinfecting chemicals, two masks for every learner and WCED staff member and digital temperature scanners for the simple screening process that every staff member and learner must undergo every day.

We budgeted R310 million for this which is reflected in this Adjustment Budget as it had to be taken from other crucial programs in our Department, mainly infrastructure, but the costs have already exceeded R400 million. All necessary materials were made available to schools in time for the scheduled opening dates. In addition, schools have to be decontaminated when a positive case at a school is identified. This costs an average of R3 500 each time, so an additional R21 million has been set aside for this purpose over and above the cost of the health and safety supplies for schools. The cost of this work has been tremendous, which brings us to the triple blow dealt by the Special Adjustment Budget.

Firstly, the R159 million cut that the National Government has made to Education Infrastructure Grant will mean that infrastructure projects will need to be put on hold. The cut comes at a time when the pandemic has exposed just how important having sufficient space at schools is. So, we will not be able to provide that space to future generations of learners. If these cuts continue, we will be left with no infrastructure grant at all.

Compounding this problem is the shameful burning and vandalising of schools by protestors, three in the last 10 days. One is a special needs school that was petrol bombed on two separate occasions. We cannot allow this to continue and we cannot prioritise repairing school buildings that are deliberately damaged over the other schools that have been waiting patiently for infrastructure upgrades and will continue waiting as long as the Budget keeps on getting cut.

Secondly, despite the President's claim that money was no object in the fight against COVID-19, our Department has not seen a cent from the National Government. The millions required to purchase the cleaning and safety materials that our schools cannot do without, was entirely funded from our own Budget. This has had to come predominantly from our infrastructure budget, including what is left of our Education Infrastructure Grant funding. Schools where teachers have tested positive need substitute teachers at a time when we are already short of staff.

We have also made a number of classroom assistant posts available to be filled by those who have completed or who are currently studying toward Education or another suitable degree. They will assist at schools where teachers are working from home because of high risk co-morbidities, delivering lessons in the classroom. Funding these positions will also cost a substantial amount for which we have also received no extra funding from National Government.

Finally, we know that the National Government will have to cut the provincial share if they are to continue funding corrupt State-owned Enterprises whilst complying with the conditions of the IMF Loan. Unfortunately, when cuts to the provincial share are made, Education inevitably bears the brunt of this because our Budget is large, but so are our needs and every cut presents a massive challenge to our delivery of quality education. There is no spare money hanging around. There is no fat to cut. So the triple blow will be nothing short of devastating unless we finally see some of the money promised by President Ramaphosa during his visit to the Western Cape.

As my HOD explained to the Standing Committee last week, we do not need the money because we are wasteful and frivolous spenders. We need it because the number of learners in this province is constantly increasing. Further cuts simply mean we have to stop building schools; hiring and training teachers; delivering learning materials and supporting security efforts. These are the cold hard facts. Facts which the members of this

House are well acquainted with, having scrutinised the budgets each year. Yet, whenever the opportunity arises for an Opposition party to cash in on problems with crowded classrooms or school vandalism they attack the Department, knowing full well that the reason we cannot always assist is because of the National Government's squandering and corruption. And they can repeat as often as they like that this is blaming and complaining, I will never stop blaming and complaining about corruption and incompetence when it means that our youth is being deprived of their future.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I told the Standing Committee on Education last week that Budget meetings are never good meetings for our Department. This is true. We always seem to be facing cuts and we never have enough, but I neglected to add that Budget meetings are also a source of pride for me because the staff of the WCED, led by my HOD Mr Brian Schreuder, achieve incredible feats despite shrinking budgets.

In this terrible and unusual time they have found just what it means to put education first and have sacrificed countless hours to mitigate the negative effects of this pandemic on our children. I thank them all most sincerely. I also would like to end by offering my deepest condolences to the families of the 30 WCED staff members who have passed away due to this illness and of the many other residents of this province that this virus has claimed. I also share the happiness of those who have recovered and hope that many more will join their number in restored health. Thank you.

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

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, can you ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can hear you.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the African National Congress to engage on the proposed Budget Adjustment for Education. We do so aware that our country and the Western Cape battles against an invisible enemy. COVID-19 has already affected 1 920 staff and 379 learners at over 685 schools in our province. We pay tribute to the over 30 staff members who have sadly lost their lives to COVID-19.

Hon Deputy Speaker, leadership requires us to be sensitive to the concerns raised by our people and to act with humility and foresight when addressing their concerns. If we are dismissive and arrogant, we will not only fail to lead, but we will weaken the collective structures aimed at bettering education in our province. Humility and foresight are what the gigantic young African revolutionary intellectual, the former founding President of the ANC Youth League, Anton Lembede, taught us, and we commemorate his untimely death in 1947 on this day.

Hon Deputy Speaker, at the time that we require more resources for psychological support for our teachers, for our learners, who are traumatised and maybe even to their families, which this Budget sadly fails to include, MEC Schäfer's Department has embarked on a drive to intimidate teachers in poor schools.

Mr Wesley Newman, the principal of Heathfield High School and Lauren Arries Hendricks, a teacher at Fairmount High School in Grassy Park are facing the wrath of the Western Cape Department of Education. We hope and trust that solutions, amicable solutions, will be found to these cases following constructive engagements between all parties involved. This Department's bias, hon Deputy Speaker, towards former Model C schools is clear for all to see.

We do not support the Department's move to encourage former Model C schools such as Groote Schuur High School in Cape Town, and York High in George, that are revolting against school closures to apply for deviations. The end result of this will be widening the inequality gap between the rich and poor schools. The ANC caucus in this province will call on the National Education Department to issue regulations which will curb the application for deviations. At the same time, the WCED must stop declining applications for teachers with co-morbidities to work from home.

This Budget, hon Deputy Speaker, was an opportunity to cater for employment of more teachers and not just teacher assistants. It has failed to

rise to the occasion. We are all too well aware of the impact of school closures on learning and especially on poor learners who rely on the feeding scheme of the Department. In fact, during the Level 5 lockdown the ANC insisted that the WCED continues the feeding scheme during school closure but not in the manner in which they were doing it.

We did not have exactly the same view as our alliance partners and as SADTU in the province. We therefore welcome the provision of the resources of the millions for a special school feeding program. R18 million to benefit approximately 1 000 schools. The reality, hon Deputy Speaker, of our schools in the under-privileged areas pose a hindrance to learners' right to obtaining free equality education. Our overcrowded classrooms are a common feature which remains unaddressed in schools in under-privileged communities.

Broken fences compromise the safety of teachers and learners and poor infrastructure is a further impediment to learning and we want to condemn in the strongest terms those anarchic protests where schools are being vandalised. No cause can justify those type of activities. These are the same conditions, hon Deputy Speaker, that create an environment for widespread COVID-19 infections in our schools.

In various schools in Khayelitsha, Esangweni Secondary, uMalela Primary, and Lukela Primary and many other schools, principals have complained that learners gained entry through broken fences and move straight to classes,

bypassing all the safety protocols. Nomzamo Primary School community in Strand recently picketed outside the WCED offices, demanding replacement of prefabricated temporary structures in their school, with formal brick classrooms, after the recent storm destroyed their school.

These issues, hon Deputy Speaker, will remain sadly unaddressed as the infrastructure budget has been slashed as the MEC has indicated. The safety of teachers and learners are not guaranteed under these conditions. Now, while the Provincial Government and our MEC may complain of cutting of funds by National Government – yes, they blame and complain – it has yet to prove to the people of the Western Cape how well it spends the billions that it does receive from the National Government. Over and above this, the WCED's ineffective handling of the outbreak in schools exposed more teachers to the COVID-19 danger.

Riviersonderend Primary School in Overberg; Vooruitsig Primary in Darling waited for over five days for decontamination after COVID-19 positive cases were identified. At Paul Joubert Secondary School in Paarl, spraying and fogging took place while learners were seated in those classrooms. All these Budget decisions follow the R203,7 million under-expenditure by the Department in the 2019/2020 financial year.

Despite this, hon Deputy Speaker, the Department has failed to pay a small black-owned security company for the work it did. EMDA Security Services is still awaiting payment of 40 invoices to the amount of over R1 million that

has not been paid since 2018 for the work done for the Safe Schools Directorate in the Cape Winelands district. Not only is this an example of the Democratic Alliance's administration's lack of willingness to take school safety seriously, especially during the pandemic, but it also shows their scant regard for the survival of small business in our province.

The South African Scholar Transport Association (SASTA) drivers protested on numerous occasions demanding that the Government sanitise their vehicles and supply PPE's. These demands are ignored in this particular Budget and again will compromise the safety of our learners. These small operators were not making money during the lockdown, hon Deputy Speaker.

Learners in poorer schools must be assisted with mobile data so that they can also enjoy the privileges enjoyed by learners from wealthier schools. The Provincial Government gloats in the spending of billions in the Broadband Rollout Project. It is time for this broadband to be opened to the poor so that all learners can have access. The ANC will not vote in favour of this Budget for the reasons listed above, amongst others, but we commit to working with other colleagues on both sides of the House ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is up.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ... Western Cape Education Department officials whom I must commend for their positive responses and efforts in dealing with some of the matters which the ANC has brought to the attention,

both staff and learners ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Sayed.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...even the parents and guardians in order to ensure that education improves in our province. I thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Sayed. I recognise hon Botha.

Ms L J BOTHA: Hon Deputy Speaker, COVID-19 came like the proverbial thief in the night and caught us all off guard. Unfortunately, COVID-19 also presented another opportunity for the corruption and looting under party colours that we all know too well. This created the opportunity for them to plunder the State coffers to the very last penny.

Hon Deputy Speaker, to the voters, we are forced to sleep with one eye open, but our votes remain our power and punishment should happen at the polls. The President and the National Education Minister have showed us how they are bowing to the Union god. The Union god said, "Jump". They replied, "Show us how high". National Government has effectively decreased the Western Cape's Education Budget by over R150 million.

This means we are at the same financial framework we were at last year, yet we continue to innovate and keep learners fed, safe and with the promise of a

brighter future despite these cuts and National Government's unreliable education policies. Under Programme 6 the Provincial Department of Education faces a downward adjustment of R344,4 million. The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled Government to tighten the belt in every possible way, but it also revealed that education is still not a priority for the ANC Government despite, hon Deputy Speaker, more than 20 years of governance.

Infrastructure grants make facilities conducive for teaching and learning. Without it, provinces are unable to improve or expand its services. Yet the same Opposition colleagues in this House are the ones who will jump up and down because of over-crowding, limited classroom space and a large number of learners waiting to be placed. In addition, these are often the same learners who migrate to this province and run away from those provinces where the corrupt cadres are stealing taxpayers' money.

Quite frankly, hon Deputy Speaker, they are stealing education from these vulnerable learners. These learners are running from pit latrines, mud schools and ghost teachers to name but a few. Again I say, voters, the pen is mightier than the sword. Punish at the polls.

Hon Deputy Speaker, more than R400 million was set aside for PPE. This is for masks, hand sanitisers and decontamination. To ensure a safe return for our learners' timetables were set and learners were scheduled to return in a phased-in rotational basis to limit contact, innovative measures that came with no price tag but effort.

Unfortunately, it is now been a week later since the President announced the closure of our schools. Yesterday, the *Business Day* reported that these regulations have yet to be gazetted and no news yet on the academic recovery plan as the President further promised. We are running out of time. This also resembles the missing commitment of the President's R20 billion to fight COVID-19 in this province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Adjusted Appropriation also makes provision to keep feeding our learners at school. It is a shame that the Court had to compel the other 8 ANC-led provinces to feed their learners. With all of these developments, hon Deputy Speaker, the Standing Committee of Education deemed it fit to visit some schools to do oversight on how the COVID-19 regulations are implemented and whether they have received their PPE. On this note, hon Deputy Speaker, I do call on the safekeeping of PPE's at our schools because much of it has been delivered as promised by the Western Cape Government.

To the Minister: let the Safety Plan to guard this be watertight so that it is available for our learners when they return back to school and to protect them against the Coronavirus.

According to a report by STATS SA, 40% of learners will be left behind due to poor connectivity. Over 60% of respondents in this report said they have difficulty in keeping up with schoolwork at home and struggle to adapt to the

new mode of learning. Above every call we have made, I want to use these stats to amplify the call to the President and the National Minister to prioritise saving the academic year.

We are losing the grip on our learners' futures through transposing regulations. Nonetheless, I want to acknowledge those principals and teachers who are wonderfully embracing our new normal. Teachers and principals are coming up with very innovative ideas to adhere to social distancing. It is indeed a pleasure to see. Even the so-called under-privileged schools we have visited, came up with innovation that befits their finances.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Budget was tabled under longstanding but still unprecedented economic constraints. Therefore, I urge all my colleagues in this House in joining me to pay tribute to the heroes and heroines who are leading us in the fight against COVID-19 for which no budgetary allocation can compensate. We salute you with the reverence you deserve.

COVID-19 changed the nature of heroes and heroines. It is no longer a Superman, a Wonderwoman, Spiderman or the Incredible Hulk from our childhoods. Hon Deputy Speaker, the heroes and heroines today wear white uniforms with burgundy epaulettes and stethoscopes around their necks. They are registered with the South African Council of Nurses.

Our heroes and heroines have education degrees. They are registered with the

South African Council for Educators. Our heroes and heroines wear security uniforms, be it SAPS, law enforcement officers or private security uniforms. Our heroes and heroines are our social workers.

†Adjunk-Speaker, ons helde en heldinne kom in die vorm van Jan Alleman. Diegene in ons gemeenskappe wat hand opgesteek het deur te sê, “Ek is bereid om te help. Wys my net wat ek moet doen en waarin ek moet help.” Ons helde is ons vullisverwyderaars wat gedurende die inperking nog elke dag op hul poste was.

[Translation of Afrikaans paragraph follows.]

[Deputy Speaker, our heroes and heroines emerge in the form of the common man. Those in our communities who put up their hands by saying, “I am prepared to help. Just show me what I have to do and in what way I have to help.” Our heroes are our rubbish collectors who have been at their posts every day during the lockdown.]

With sadness there are many who have been unable to fight this Coronavirus and I want to extend my sincere condolences to all those who have lost loved ones due to the pandemic. I take this opportunity to thank all teachers, principals, parents, our broader community, the HOD and his team and the Minister for advancing teaching through this trying time.

In closing, hon Deputy Speaker, the WCED had to surrender funds under

most of its sub-programmes to fight COVID-19 in order to save lives and keep our residents safe. The DA in the Western Cape will ensure that learners in the Western Cape nonetheless receive the best possible education.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the DA supports the Adjusted Appropriation for Vote 5. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you hon member ... [Interjection.]

Mr P MARRAN: There are 65 learners under quarantine at Ceres Primary, Ceres Secondary School. 65 learners in quarantine. [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Marran, please. I am busy speaking. I recognise hon Makamba-Botya.

Ms N MAKAMBA-BOTYA: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. It is shocking that the DA Government cuts the Education Budget by more than R151,3 million. This is so despite the majority of public schools in the province consisting of damaged infrastructure and some schools not being inhabitable at all. The money could have been used for various activities within the Provincial Education Department aimed at reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission at schools.

For example, the Department could have used the money to contract desks with protective surroundings, plastic shields for learners and teachers in

order to minimise the transmission of COVID-19 in the schools. Also, the Department should have taken into account that most learners from public schools still rely on public transport to travel to schools. Public transport such as minibus taxis remain high risk when it comes to COVID-19 transmission and that places the lives of these learners in a compromised position. The Provincial Education Department should have used the money to organise these learners a form of transport that would adhere to health and safety protocols for the benefit of these learners and everyone else at home and in schools.

By the way, the EFF is not in support of opening schools in such a period of the COVID-19 pandemic, more specifically in the Western Cape that has been declared as an epicentre of COVID-19. The DA thinks the Western Cape is a republic inside the Republic of South Africa, playing with the lives of poor people and they should stop testing the waters with the lives of people. Therefore the EFF is not in support of this Budget. I thank you.

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

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. We support this Vote.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Herron. Hon Christians?

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: Hon Deputy Speaker ... [Inaudible – connection lost.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Christians? Can you hear me? Hon Christians?

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: I can hear you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Christians. Okay. We cannot hear you. Can you just move around? You are inaudible.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: [Inaudible – connection lost.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I cannot hear you, hon Christians. Try again.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unfortunately, hon Christians, we cannot hear you. Do you want to try once more and then unfortunately we will have to move on if it is not possible to hear you. Oh, there. I have got you. Try. You may go ahead.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, hon Christians, we really cannot hear what you are saying. I tell you what, hon Christians ... [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Now he must send a WhatsApp.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, hon Christians if they can just try and call. I am just going to see if – probably hon Marais is not online. Let me just see what we are going to do. Is hon Marais and hon Brinkhuis...hon Brinkhuis, are you still in the House? Would you like to speak?

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Yes, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wonder if you could speak first hon Brinkhuis, and then we will go and try hon Christians again.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The Al Jama-ah does not support this Budget. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That was quick. Thank you, hon Brinkhuis. Hon Christians, I did not give you much time. Do you want to try one more time?

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am so sorry. It just does not seem audible at all. Hon Christians, my apologies. I do apologise but we will have to move on to the Minister if that is okay. Alright. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, and thank you to those who contributed to the debate and those who are supporting the Vote. I think, I will start from the bottom. Hon

Brinkhuis, your reasons for not supporting the Bill would be interesting to hear. As far as hon Botha is ... [Interjection.]

Mr F C CHRISTIANS: I wanted to get to my car to open the gate. Did you now open the gate?

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Ah. Now we hear hon Christians ... [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Please open the gate for the hon ... [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Open the gate!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, I have now had to mute hon Christians who then became audible. Sorry, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Thank you, hon Herron also for the support. Hon member Makamba-Botya, yes, unfortunately we had to cut the Budget, it was cut from the National Treasury. It was not our choice, I can assure you and I completely agree with everything you say. We could have really used that money. It is from our Infrastructure Grant and we desperately need it for infrastructure. So I agree with all of that, but it is not the DA that is cutting it. We are just implementing the cuts that have been imposed on us by National Treasury.

As far as the transport is concerned, I also agree with you. It is posing a huge risk to our learners when the National Government agree to allow taxis to operate at 100% capacity, because the taxi associations informed them that they were going to do so.

So it just shows that the National Government has no backbone whatsoever. That they kowtow to whoever makes the most noise and whoever says, “We are not going to do it”. I think it is extremely concerning. As far as the Western Cape being the epicentre, you may not have been following the news recently, but we certainly are not the epicentre anymore. Fortunately, our numbers are now going down and the epicentre seems to be Gauteng which has got hugely increasing cases ... [Interjection.]

Mr P MARRAN: Because we are not testing anymore.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The Eastern Cape of course is now also the epicentre of corruption. Hon Botha, thank you very much for your comments. The looting is an extreme concern and I think “looter continua” takes on a whole new meaning with the ANC and government and I completely agree with you that punishment should take place at the polls and also support you in recognising the heroes after the pandemic.

It is a concern that a week after the President announced school closures that there are yet no regulations in place. So, effectively, the closing is illegal but given the implications it has on our system we have gone with it in the

honest belief that they would be published very shortly, and I sincerely hope that by tomorrow they will be.

As far as hon Sayed is concerned, that is the most that I have to reply to. So, I agree with you that we must be humble in the face of leadership and I think we have been extremely humble in the face of some incredibly vicious personal attacks on myself and the HOD, sometimes by some of our staff members actually. And we certainly have exhibited foresight as I have mentioned in our planning for this pandemic.

As far as intimidation is concerned, I am not going to comment on specific individuals because I am the appeal authority in any disciplinary action, but I do want to point out that the ANC is aligning itself with a dismissed former principal who was dismissed from the Department because he just could not exercise self-discipline on an ongoing basis and he would not work with people he was supposed to work with. So I think if staff members, in general, think that they can intimidate other people to try and follow their course of action, insult their employer in public on an ongoing basis, refuse to comply with lawful instructions, they can expect action to follow and that is not intimidation. It is called discipline.

As far as bias is concerned towards Model C schools, for example Groote Schuur, we will certainly accept your call to not accept the deviation. In fact we do not have the authority to not accept the deviation because the regulations allow for them to do so on condition that they can comply with

the relevant protocols and I commend them for doing so, quite honestly.

The ANC's stance is that if everyone cannot have the same, then nobody must have anything and why do we not rather concentrate on making other schools better instead of making everybody else worse? That seems to be the ANC philosophy and that is not what we subscribe to. Let us uplift the others, not try and bring everyone down to the lowest common denominator.

As far as our money is concerned, we have done extremely well in providing for the poor. The only reason we have not done more for the poor which we would love to have done, is because of the ANC's corruption. So, it is costing us hundreds of billions of rands and even in the COVID-19 crisis they still carry on looting.

So I would love to have done even more but we have done extremely well with the money we have had from National Treasury. We have provided many, many items of relief for poorer schools. We have changed the norms and standards funding. We have allowed for no-fee schools just because we have really acknowledged the plight that they are facing and we would love to do more if there was more money available, instead of continuous cuts.

Nomzamo cannot have a brick and mortar school right now, because it is leased land where the mobile school is. We have done extremely well in fixing it within a week of it and thank you to our colleagues in Public Works together with my infrastructure team. We have also acquired land in the

area, because of growth, for a new primary and high school which will serve the youth of Nomzamo and Lwandle and it already is in planning and the first expected phased-in occupancy is 2022, if all goes according to plan, which I hope it will.

As far as Riviersonderend is concerned it did not need decontaminating. People tested positive about a week before the time of the demand for decontamination. So it was not necessary, and we were not very happy with the way it was dealt with.

As far as this business is concerned, I do not know why it has to be emphasized that it is a black-owned business. Whatever business it is it is not acceptable if we owe them money and we have not paid, and I will certainly take that up with the Department if you would like to send me further details. I will happily receive those.

Small transporters are an ongoing topic that hon Sayed wants to keep on beating about. It is not our job to supply sanitisers and money to independent companies and small businesses. We are just not able to do that. It is not our mandate. We do not have the funds. We have engaged with private operators that are contracted as part of the Learner Transport Scheme. All transport companies are expected to comply with the gazetted directions of the National Minister of Transport and we certainly do not have the mandate or resources to prop up private businesses. Hon Sayed knows how tight the Budget is and we cannot transport people. Everyone is losing money because

of the ongoing illogical regulations that are affecting every aspect of our economy and unfortunately Education cannot pick up a tab for the ANC's ongoing incompetence.

Data – same story. We would love to give more data, but we are the only province really that has rolled out broadband to all our schools at least and we have put out many Wi-Fi hotspots for people to access. So we have done as much as we possibly can, but hon Sayed does not appear to have an understanding of the desperate state of financial peril that we are actually facing at the moment.

So I think I have covered all the issues. I would like to just end by saying thank you very much to all the contributors. I want to thank the members of this House, my Cabinet colleagues, all of my senior executive members in my Department and of course also to the Chairperson of the Standing Committee and the members of the Standing Committee, and I hereby table Budget Vote 5 for adoption. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you hon Minister. That concludes the debate on this vote.

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Hon Deputy Speaker ... [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, before you – is there a point of order?

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Hon Deputy Speaker, it is member Brinkhuis here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Brinkhuis. Yes?

Mr G BRINKHUIS: Yes, it is hon member Brinkhuis here. The MEC for Education wanted a response from Al Jama-ah if you could allow me, Deputy Speaker, to respond to the MEC.

An HON MEMBER: Yes, please.

An HON MEMBER: Send an e-mail.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, unfortunately I cannot do that, and you can do that via e-mail, hon Brinkhuis. [Interjection.]

Mr P MARRAN: [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We cannot do that once the Minister has spoken, according to the Rules. Hon Marran, can I just have a word with you. You have been interjecting for the entire sitting without any respect for the Presiding Officer, which is myself and I have asked on numerous occasions that you respect the Rules of this House. So I ask again that you do not interject when I am talking to a member and that you respect the Rules of this House in this sitting. Hon members, before we leave, that concludes ... [Interjection.] the business for the day but please note that on Friday 31 July

2020 the proceedings will commence at 10 o'clock in the morning. The House is adjourned, and the Secretary will now end the meeting. Thank you, members.

The House adjourned at 16.30.