
WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY 2024

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

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

The House met at 10:45.

The Speaker took the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Before we start the proceedings, I will allow Mr Hilton Donson, Ms Violantia Green, Ms Elichia Farao and Mr Cedrick Wakefield from the Groote Schuur Hospital Choir the opportunity to render the National Anthem.

Members and guests, I request you remain silent during the National Anthem.

National Anthem rendered by members of the Groote Schuur Hospital Choir.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The Speaker read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Order! I want to take this opportunity to welcome all our esteemed guests to the Sitting today, but before we proceed, I would like to remind members about some of the logistical arrangements. Hon members, the quorum requirements for this Sitting of the House are provided for in the Constitution and the Standing Rules. Unless there is an indication of unanimous concurrence, voting will be confined to members present in the House and who are entitled to cast their votes as per our Standing Rules. Members who are considered out of order by the Presiding Officer will have their microphones muted. The Serjeant-at-Arms will record members' attendance.

Hon members, today's Sitting shall be governed by the Standing Rules and in instances where these Rules cannot be applied the ruling by the Presiding Officer is final. Members should please note that all microphones are now muted. When an hon member wishes to raise a point of order, such hon member may address the Presiding Officer, as expected, but must please mute their microphones when they have completed speaking. Hon guests, I request you, who are not members of the House, to please observe the decorum of the House.

As is customary for all Sittings of the WCPP, the proceedings will be broadcast live. For Sitting translations, members, Language Translation Services are available in the Chamber, as usual, and via the respective

channels.

Hon members, I have to announce that in terms of Rule 14 of the Standing Rules, today, 31 July 2024 at 10:45 am has been determined as the date and time for the Premier's Opening Address. This Sitting, hon members, is meant specifically for the purpose of affording the Premier an opportunity to deliver the Premier's Opening Address and on this occasion no business other than the address by the Premier will be entertained.

I also wish to remind members that the debate on the address will take place tomorrow, on 1 August 2024, where hon members will have an opportunity to fully engage and debate the Premier's Opening Address and the Premier will reply to the debate thereafter.

Hon members, please join me to afford the hon, the Premier of the Western Cape, the opportunity to address the House. I recognise you, hon Premier.

THE PREMIER'S OPENING ADDRESS

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker; hon Deputy Speaker; hon members of the Provincial Cabinet; Deputy Minister, it is really good to have you here; Deputy Minister Sarupen, Deputy Minister of Finance, welcome; my wife and my son, Louis and Lucile; to the hon members of this Legislature; to the Leader of the Opposition; to members of the diplomatic corps that I see around the House; to Mayors; to councillors; to members of

the media; distinguished guests; General Patekile, welcome; and of course good morning, *goeiemôre*, *molweni* to the residents of this beautiful province, the Western Cape.

Speaker, this year, we, in the Western Cape and South Africa, joined two billion other people across 50 countries that went to the ballot box to make their mark in defending and deepening democracy.

In too many places across the world democracy is in danger and under attack from extremism, populism, and nationalism. Many of us feared that here in South Africa those pernicious voices would also win. However, rationality and tolerance prevailed. We eschewed violence and dangerous politicking in the interests of the majority of our residents.

While we have emerged from the 2024 General Elections with optimism and hope, that a different trajectory is possible for this country, Speaker, I am still deeply concerned by the number of South Africans who did not vote in our hard-won democracy.

Speaker, of the 63 million citizens in our country, 27.7 million of them have registered to vote but only 16,2 million actually voted. Speaker, in 1994, 86% of eligible voters in our country voted. In 2024, only 41% of our citizens voted. That is four out of 10 in South Africa.

Speaker, as public representatives we must ask why and how we can reverse

this trend of so many opting out of the democratic process. Speaker, members in this House, it is up to us. We must make sure that we, and how we behave and what we do in the work of this Seventh Parliament, that we do it in such a way that people of this province see that they matter. We must make sure that through our work we build this province for them and for our future.

Speaker, I am sure that every member in this House, in campaigning before this election, came across citizens who said: "What is the point of voting? Why should I bother? Things will not change."

Speaker, it is up to every single one of us elected here to represent all of the citizens of this province, to make sure that this term we make that difference. We show people that politics counts and that your vote matters and that your vote counts.

Speaker, I must say that as we start this seventh term, I have already had the privilege of a meeting with the Leader of the Opposition and I thank him for that meeting, for the discussions that we had to say, what do we do about this; how do we take this forward? I look forward to also meeting one-on-one with the Leaders of the Parties represented here. I had a discussion with the Leader of Government Business and he too will look at these frameworks of how we utilise this space, this Parliament, to do exactly that, to show the citizens that their vote matters, their vote counts and that we every single day will work in the interests of making the difference for our citizens.

Speaker, this election has also given us a Government of National Unity (GNU) at a national level and we are reminded, Speaker, of the founding principles of South Africa that was born in 1994 under also a GNU. These principles of equal opportunities, inclusiveness and fighting for the respect for the rule of law still stand today.

Speaker, I am reminded of what our late former President Nelson Mandela said at his inauguration, and I quote:

“Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity’s belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all hopes for glorious life for all.”

Speaker, the residents and voters of our extraordinary province have shown faith and trust in us by giving us their vote, and I do not take this trust for granted. Actually, Speaker, I mentioned about four out of 10 in South Africa. In this province, the Western Cape, six out of 10 registered voters voted for this Parliament.

I am completely committed to working even harder for our residents every single day for the next five years. Thank you to the voters and to this House for the honour that you have given me to serve as your Premier. I am deeply humbled.

Speaker, there are formidable challenges ahead of us. As we confront them together, if we are to lift the most vulnerable in our society out of poverty, jumpstart the economy and build South Africa and this province now and for the future. Mr Speaker, the Western Cape Government is committed to doing everything we can to help the Government of National Unity succeed for you, the residents of the Western Cape. We must build on our successes of the past five years. We will work closely with other spheres of government. We will support them when it is in the interests of our residents and fight for our residents when we do not believe that they are doing so. We are committed to cooperative governance, but we will also hold National Government to account.

A critical focus of this Government over the next five years will be financial sustainability. We cannot build more hospitals and roads, employ more teachers and doctors, and serve our communities if we do not get the funding our residents deserve.

Speaker, and specifically for the new members of this House, last year we had an in-year budget cut, after this House had approved the budget; after approved budgets through processes of M Techs, through processes of Parliament, through agreeing to how budgets are to be spent. In the middle of that year, after we had already entered into contracts of building schools or employing people, we had a budget cut of R1,1 billion and that affects the citizens directly, because services get taken away and we believe that that was an absolutely illegal occurrence and we launched an intergovernmental

dispute.

We pioneered this process, because we cannot accept it and we cannot allow these things to happen in our country. We cannot prejudice our own citizens through these kinds of processes. We had to find a way without going to court and I am happy that we did so. We have committed to work with the National Treasury and Minister Godongwana, but we will not hesitate to act if we feel that the spirit of cooperation we achieved in resolving this dispute is broken or compromised. Minister Baartman has very clear instructions to make sure that the people of the Western Cape get their fair share of the budget.

Speaker, the Census shows that the Western Cape is the fastest growing province in South Africa. We now have the third most populous province in our country, but, Speaker, we still get the fifth most money and that is unacceptable. That is why we want our fair share of the budget, nothing more, nothing less, our fair share, our fair allocation to this province. We know that we grow by about 150 000 residents every single year and we must make sure that everyone gets a fair opportunity.

We will not just do this for the Western Cape, we will do this alongside Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal, because they too are being prejudiced by this process, and we must make sure that they too get their fair share.

That is why it is specifically nice to welcome the Deputy Minister here today, so that he knows that we are going to be pushing for that fair share. But, Speaker, as a Provincial Government we also have to explore alternative funding opportunities and over the next five years I will be holding this Government to account to make sure that we diversify our revenue streams wherever we can.

With the excellent track record of good governance that we have worked so hard to achieve, there are so many opportunities out there for us to pursue borrowing for critical mega investments that we want to make.

Speaker, I have mentioned borrowing in this House before and I think back to the last term. We did not get it right. We had COVID-19, we had the global economic meltdown, we had energy crisis, climate change disasters, but we have to make sure that in this term we get it right. We must make sure that we bolster our revenue sources so that we do not waste this Seventh Parliament, we do not waste this seventh term in making sure that we invest for the future; and Speaker, building for the future is not just about fiscal sustainability, it is also about developing the right policies and ensuring that they are implementable now. We must work better for now and for the future. This Government has learnt to become more agile and nimble, given the often-unpredictable environment in which we have to operate. We have weathered so much and I must thank in large part the dedication of the 90 000 people who work in this Government in service of the people every single day, represented right here by the Heads of Department.

It is anticipated, Speaker, that our population will reach 10 million citizens by 2040. I spoke about the 150 000 people moving every single year to this province, in large part because of our commitment to good governance and a jobs-rich economy. But Speaker, this population growth comes with significant challenges. It places increased pressure on every single one of us in this Government. Health and Education and Social Development specifically, and Speaker, in response we have innovated. We have come up with new ways of doing things. I think of the Rapid School Build and how we have found ways in which to build a school in 70 days, unheard of. We put 2 000 new classrooms in place and 48 new classrooms for learners with special needs. I have visited some of these schools, I think about Lwandle, an amazing investment, where not only a school is built but we have brought in solar panels and battery systems, boreholes and water filtration systems and water tank storage. This is about innovation; this is about doing things differently in the interests of our citizens.

Speaker, with an ever-increasing population and climate change we are also placing our natural resources, our infrastructure and our agricultural sector under more and more pressure.

Speaker, managing precious resources such as water is vitally important and that is why I have added it personally to one of my commitments to drive in this coming term. Speaker, as we stand here today our dams might be *propvol* or overflowing, we cannot be assured of water security. Do you

know, Speaker, that it was not so long ago that we had Day Zero, and a few years before that our dams then were also *propvol*.

You know, Speaker, that quite interestingly three weeks before these current floods, Minister Bredell and his Department and the weather services were busy preparing for us a document at Cabinet level to say we must expect a very dry winter and that a possibility of drought coming into the future is here. If you think about it, when you were all campaigning, when we were all campaigning, it was not raining. It was a dry May. We had not had any rain yet. Normally, I would say, the Easter Weekend is when the floodgates open. It did not happen this year, but I must say that when it did happen, we have just had a year's worth of rain in a week.

Speaker, our province is feeling the fury of the climate-change crisis. This crisis is unfolding before our eyes. On Monday last week the earth had its hottest day on record, beating the previous record set only 24 hours earlier.

At the same time while this was happening in the Northern Hemisphere, I was with the media having a look at ducks paddling across our flooded N1. Each year we are seeing more severe fires, heavier rainfall and floods than ever before. Virtually every month this year so far we have seen a major disaster of some sort, from vicious fires to a mass power outage in the Karoo, and to heavy, heavy rains and floods.

Speaker, I also think about a man-made disaster. More than 30 people were left dead when that building in George collapsed and many, many more injured. I remember arriving on the scene. It felt like I arrived at an earthquake, normally seen on television. It was an unbelievably emotional space to just stand and observe what had just happened. But it was unbelievable to see how many professional people stepped in and started to work seamlessly together from across organisations, from professionals to volunteers. It was unbelievable to watch how South Africans step up when they are needed.

I must say that they never gave up and it was unbelievable, 100 hours into this disaster, when Gabriel Guambe was pulled out of that wreckage. It was an unbelievable feeling of renewed hope when I saw that stretcher come out and he put his hand up. It really was amazing. It was through the unwavering dedication and professionalism of our disaster officials that Gabriel and so many others are saved. Just some of those extraordinary people who saved so many are here in the gallery with us today, and I want to pause for a moment to recognise them and the thousands of people who work with them in every single disaster and emergency. You are extraordinary and epitomise so much of what this Government strives to be. I am not sure where you all are, but you can stand up. Colin, you and your team... [Applause.]

The PREMIER: I'm not sure where you all are, but you can stand up. Colin, you and your team ...[Applause.]

Hon Speaker, while we celebrate the many lives saved, my thoughts, our thoughts remain with the families of those who perished. We will do everything in our power to ensure that those responsible for this unspeakable tragedy face the consequences of their negligence. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: When? When?

The PREMIER: We must ask that question when. [Interjections.] Ja, absolutely. [Interjections.] The National Department currently is investigating ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, speak to me.

The PREMIER: The Police are busy investigating.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: We have investigated ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: ...busy investigating.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon Premier. Hon Premier, can I please remind you to speak to me. [Interjections.] Order, hon members.

The PREMIER: Thank you, hon Speaker. We must be able to [Interjections.] interject every now and again. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Interjections are allowed, but the hon members will have an opportunity tomorrow, hon Premier, and please do not engage the hon member directly, but speak through me and to the hon member.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, while reflecting on disasters and the disaster management teams across this province, I think about the investment that this Government has put into training and enabling. I think about the Disaster Management Centre. I think about the plans for the new centre because, of course, Tygerberg Hospital, where the Centre is right now, is going to be rebuilt. So, the Centre has to be reinvested in.

I think about what this next generation is going to look like and, of course, we need to be planning that now and building it as soon as possible. But I also think when I think about that Centre, I think about this current flood and I think about meeting there just the other day and it was different. It was different because of this GNU and this Government of National Unity: there is a different feeling of optimism, of hope, of a different future as we move forward in our next 30 years of democracy.

Hon Speaker, you know that last year, we declared the floods a disaster. Our

teams jumped in, our infrastructure teams rebuilt roads and bridges. Across every department, we tackled the damage, and we did so incredibly quickly. We are still owed R1,3-billion or we are R1,3-billion out of pocket from that disaster. And again, just as we want our fair share, our fair allocation, we need to make sure that we also get after a disaster is declared, that we get our fair share given to us as we spend money on dealing with these disasters.

But hon Speaker, I think about this current one and two weeks ago Friday, the Disaster Management Team pulled together the report and sent it off to the National Minister of COGTA. It went off at about 10 o'clock. By 2 o'clock we had an answer back. Never heard of before! We had an answer back to say yes, please go ahead. We need to declare this disaster.

On the Monday, the Minister, the Deputy Minister, and we met at the Disaster Centre. It bodes well for a different future for this Seventh Term. A new energy. We agreed right there that we are going to work differently with other provinces; put an MOU in place between our provinces. But still, we need to make sure that we get our funding from the previous disaster, as well as the support and funding for this disaster.

We also have to make sure that we think differently about disasters. We budget, hon Minister, differently for disasters. Hon Speaker, in the immediate term I have asked the hon Ministers and Departments of Infrastructure, of Agriculture, of Local Government, Environmental Affairs, Development Planning, that we need to urgently identify the infrastructure,

land and water sources that could be vulnerable to flooding and of course, to fires, in this financial year. We must become more proactive. We must make sure that we do not only react after a disaster has been called.

I think specifically right now, to the town of Citrusdal. And interestingly, when this framework of a speech was being put together, Citrusdal had been cut off twice: last year and again, this year and then, of course, just two days ago I saw, washed away again a third time. These citizens are our citizens who are cut off and we cannot have them cut off every single year. We have to plan differently. We have to build back differently. We have to make sure that we have the funding and that we put it into putting bigger pipes in place, building bigger drains. The system of planning has got to bring into account the climate change. River Management has got to change. Firebreak Management has got to change.

Hon Speaker, I also support the hon Minister of Infrastructure in his call for the visit that took place. Again, the National Minister, during this flood, the Minister of Human Settlements came and met with hon Minister Simmers. But the question was we have centralised the starter kits. We have got to think about that differently again. We need to decentralise it. We cannot wait for starter kits to be handed out because we have to get the name list of who everybody is because it is pouring with rain and they have been taken in with the family or they are sitting in a hall, or they are on the other side of the river, and we cannot react until we have filled out everybody's names. We have to change that with the Auditor-General, with our systems and with

National. We should have stock on hand here in the Province. We have got to think differently there.

I have spoken about the MOU between other provinces. This Province already steps up and moves to KZN. The latest fires in KZN, we sent teams to go and help them. The floods to years ago: we went teams to go and help them. But we are now going to formalise that because we need to be able to share these resources, specifically amongst the coastal provinces. I have already started engaging with the Premiers from those provinces.

And in the medium term and longer term, we need to do evidence-based reviews of our natural, agricultural and built environments. We need to make sure the hard decisions and the actions now to build a more vierkragtige [07:08] province that we can withstand the unpredictable environment that we face. We have to learn every single day.

Now, hon Speaker, to move from disasters and disaster mitigation to embracing innovation and technology. Hon Speaker, anyone who spends more than a few minutes with me will know that I love technology and innovation. I am even happier when tech and the growing world of artificial intelligence helps us to improve service delivery and reduce the burden on our staff. We hold innovation very close to our hearts in this Government. Innovation allows us to approach issues, resolve problems and improve how we work in unique and different ways.

Hon Speaker, I initially think immediately of health and the robotic surgeries that we now offer. More than 500 procedures have taken place already in Tygerberg and Groote Schuur. I think about the connectivity and the tech that is used, for example, between these two hospitals and the George hospital. Our hospitals are already holding indabas where we are sharing this information across our continent. We have got to make sure that we build, and we improve, and innovation helps us to do that.

I think about the new pathology or the pathology centre that has been built. I think about how we can deal with DNA, how we can. And when I think about it and you go and visit it, you can see the innovation, you can see that it is the most modern pathology lab on the continent. You can see how it links through to the police work that they have to do to make sure that we can use pathology services to fight crime. When I go there, I think of some of these TV series and movies where you see the pathology services: CSI. You see how they use DNA to track down criminals.

I think about the training facilities for our LEAP officers, using technology like Eye-in-the-Sky. I think about the donations made of drones to our district municipalities to use Eye-in-the-Sky support in fighting crime. I think of ShotSpotter, I think of the 3-D tech training system for our LEAP officers. We have got to make sure that we continually innovate and use technology.

Just a short while ago, hon Minister Londt, you and I were there to launch the

Social Worker Integrated Management System: SWIMS. Congratulations! Well done! Well done to the teams who developed it. It is through these programmes that our social workers are going to find more time to serve their clients, to serve their customers because administration has been taken away and made much simpler. You reflected how much quicker it is to get to service a client because the administration gets improved through this process. We can do away with those piles of files and of course, the officials love dumping those files on our laps so that we can see exactly what they have to work with today, and tomorrow is going to be way better because of these kinds of investments and innovation.

Hon Speaker, our embrace of innovation is being noticed and recognised. Last month, we scooped the esteemed Public Service Innovation Award at the United Nations Public Service Forum. This took place in Korea, and we beat 400 other entries from over 70 countries. Hon Speaker, we were given this award. A beautiful United Nations crest on the top. Hon Speaker, this award is in recognition, and I must face the officials here.

Because this is in recognition of the years and years of work that has gone into developing our broadband strategies, in developing our connectedness across government, in making sure that through that connectiveness we have new innovations like the App that I have just spoken about. All of these technologies that all of your departments use, because it is about public service, and this is a Public Service Award for you and the 90 000 workers that work with you. Congratulations! [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, in recognising you, our residents and you will all know about For You, it is also about the culture journey of us in the government. Culture matters in an organisation and while we continue to invest heavily in innovation and technology, we know that it is the connection and conversation, holding your hand and showing you that care must be at the forefront of everything that we do. Culture is about how we interact, how we answer a phone, how we answer an email. How at the coalface in our main departments, we interact with our citizens. It is the feeling you get. Culture in an organisation is something that just does not happen. You have got to make sure there is a team behind it.

Two years ago, we started on this journey, and I want to thank the team that has taken us on this journey. We have still got a long way to go, but we are on that journey, and it is multi-faceted. I think to First Thursdays. First Thursdays is exactly that, how we are open to our citizens every first Thursday of the month. They can come at 5 o'clock and meet any of the Ministers, any of the HODs and their departments, raise any issue they want to raise. We are there to listen to them. Perhaps, we cannot fix everything that they bring to us, but they get an ear. They get an opportunity that influences policy over time but fixes their issues. They bring great ideas, or they bring an issue because they cannot get an answer and we find ways to give them that answer.

Hon Speaker, what I also do is unannounced visits and not only me, but we

also encourage it across all of the Ministers and the DG does exactly the same thing with the Heads of Department and members of our staff: unannounced visits. It is not about muffins and coffee. It is about sitting in the queue with the citizens asking them how long they have been waiting. How many times have they been here to get service. What has the service been like. Those of you that know me it is also about the weeds in the gutter or the cracked glass at the entrance or the tile that is missing. That is why we will continue with our project called the Face of Government.

I think about Vanguard facility, the healthcare facility there, and I think about how it has improved. Not only the look and feel, but I also got a photograph the other day of the new filing system because when filing systems work better and when they get digitised, and we can use technology, we can help our citizens far quicker and far better.

Hon Speaker, we pride ourselves on offering quality public service so that we must also take care and take pride in how our facilities look, and we take pride in our staff. We have a long way to go on our culture journey as a government, but you, our Western Cape Government family matter and that is one of the many reasons why I am so proud of the TOPCO award for being a top employer. I remember the DG looking at me with a strange look when I said we are going to enter this competition of the best place to work in the world. But DG, thank you. That same team, the Culture Journey Team, put this Government and I cannot find other governments in this race, and I welcome some of our other governments to join us in this race, but we

entered the race.

I am super proud, again, hon Speaker, looking towards the DG and the HODS, that the Western Cape Government has achieved Top Employer status for the year 2023. We are amongst 1 700 private sector businesses on the African continent that are in this competition. We will continue in this competition, and it will be global because, of course, it moves to other continents as well, and we will continue focusing on the culture of this organisation until we are up there with the big brands, the big global brands, until we are up there measuring our culture. That, we do for you. With our staff, we are governing for you, our residents and we will continue to work on this every single day. So, congratulations!

Hon Speaker, I must also then mention that For You and the government offering services to our citizens, is a two-way street. It also means responsibility. We cannot just say we will build you a house, we will give you healthcare, we will give you education, *et cetera, et cetera*. Our citizens also have to be part of this agreement. They also have to play their part. It is about responsible citizens. It is about those citizens that are involved in our Neighbourhood Watches, serve on our governing bodies. They are our eyes and ears. Especially those citizens during the holiday season when our schools get vandalised. That is the agreement we need. We cannot just keep repairing vandalised schools, we need to make sure that we are on the lookout. We are taking responsibility.

It is making sure that we, across our province as citizens, are supporting each other to build a better province. It is about the responsibility of making sure your child is at school. About the responsibility of making sure that you do not just drop litter everywhere. About the responsibility of making sure that when you need to take your medicine, you take your medicine because only through that process will we reduce the burden of disease and costs in our system.

But also, I want to take the opportunity, hon Speaker, to thank those citizens, those residents who are part of this partnership. I think about those who help us in responding to the crises that I have spoken about. People that arrive with eyedrops and people that arrive with Energade for our firefighters. People in flood times, like we have just had, who take citizens into their homes, who arrive with blankets and food. Those people, we honour today, and we thank them.

I think about the organisations. We think about Gift of the Givers and so many social NGO organisations that step up. We think about those service clubs like Rotary, and Lions, and Round Table. We think about those organisations that exist in places like Mitchells Plain, who paint out the graffiti, who clean the parks. You are noticed: thank you very much for what you do across this Province. That is about responsible citizens, picking up litter on our beaches, making sure that together, we build a better province.

Hon Speaker, our commitment to our priorities remains. Of course, we are a government that has moved from one term into another, but while we mark the start of a Seventh Administration, we will continue to focus on our priorities of building a growing, inclusive infrastructure-led economy that creates jobs. Of building our energy and water security to support and enable this very economy. Creating safer communities and a push for devolving power of SAPS down to provinces. [Interjections.] Supporting Law Enforcement resources ...[Interjections.] to build a safer province. Further improving the Provinces education and healthcare systems.

Hon Speaker, while speaking about jobs and the economy, jobs are the bedrock of building a prosperous province. Hon Speaker, 74% of households in this province already have at least one salary earner ...[Interjections.] in that household. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: And that is not true, that is not true, ah-ah. [Laughter]
That is not true.

The PREMIER: That was given to us by [Interjections.] Stats SA run by the National Government [Interjections.]

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

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, but I am obsessed ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order! [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: That is not true.

The SPEAKER: Order! [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: This was not ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Premier, please take your seat. [Interjections.]
Hon members ...[Interjection.] Order, hon members, I am on the floor.
[Interjections.] Hon members, you will have an opportunity tomorrow to
fully engage the ...[Interjections.] Hon Chief Whip of the Opposition, hon
members, you will have an opportunity tomorrow to fully engage and put
your rebuttals to the input by the hon Premier. It is now the hon Premier's
opportunity to do so. Can I please ask that you work with me and afford the
hon Premier the opportunity to deliver his input and you will have the same
protection tomorrow when you do yours. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I am
obsessed about jobs and enabling more jobs because with a job, so much is
unlocked for our residents. We are determined to make it as easy as possible
for the private sector to do business and create more jobs in our province.
We are doing this through initiatives like Cutting Red Tape or the ease of
doing business in the last term, saving business R2,4-billion. Small and
medium sized businesses are the engine room of our economy. And hon

Speaker, our SMME Booster Fund assisted hundreds of SMMEs, supporting and sustaining thousands of jobs and of course, this will continue.

This is part of our Growth For Jobs strategy. Our overarching blueprint for breakout economic growth. It is already one year old, and we are seeing encouraging outcomes from this bold plan, to fuel economic growth. It has set us on a path to building a strong, inclusive and diverse economy in which all our residents' benefit. Just some of the achievements of the work across the government include: 1 684 businesses supported; 15 304 jobs created or sustained; R7,5-billion in new investments facilitated; R2,8-billion export declarations reached of which R1-billion was for the African continent; 28 3048 residents supported with at least one economic opportunity pathway; 14 Ease of Doing Business improvement interventions supported.

It is through continued work like this that we will bring our unemployment rate below 20% and while that has been stubborn for the last while, we will continue to push and continue to work hard to bring it below that 20% mark.

Hon Speaker, that is why we will work tirelessly with the Government of National Unity to ensure that Operation Vulindela's plans are implemented. Here, in the Western Cape, we want to see it make an impact on improving the viability of our port, freight and logistics networks because we need to get this economy moving. While it is encouraging to see more trains on our railways, there is still not nearly enough to transport goods and people to work and to markets. I urge the Government of National Unity to prioritise

seeking private investment opportunities in the Port of Cape Town because agriculture is a critical economic enabler of this Province, with well over 50% of South Africa's agricultural exports coming from here.

To enable jobs in agriculture, we have provided agricultural education and training to 2 248 registered students, offered short skilled courses to 17 098 beneficiaries and improved financial support to 539 qualifying students in the last term. We have also supported land reform initiatives in this Province: 83% of land reform farmers supported by this Government are now considered successful agricultural businesses. The Western Cape is open for business and attracting more investment.

Earlier this year, hon Speaker, the RMB and BER Business Confidence Index showed that confidence in this province is well above other provinces. We are also seeing a sustained improvement over the last while of business confidence in the Western Cape. It starts with business confidence and then moves to enabling investment, the growth and the jobs that we are looking for. But we must do so much more, hon Speaker, because the challenges are still so severe.

Hon Speaker, I have once again made infrastructure-led economic growth and job creation a core priority of my term. I am going to work tirelessly to get the critical megaprojects off the ground, that we need to enable our economy to thrive. Once the critical steps to create an infrastructure pipeline are in place, we will make sure that these are shovel-ready because when they are

shovel-ready, the finances can flow. We set up the Department of Infrastructure with the sole purpose of building a future-proof province, with the foundations of innovation, empowerment and integration.

Over this term, the Western Cape Government will invest billions in fixed assets, catalytic growth projects and agricultural infrastructure because we know that our investments enable private sector development and more jobs.

Hon Speaker, the Western Cape is leading in delivery of affordable housing with the First Home Finance Programme. We are building homes as fast as we can and in the last term, 43 000 housing opportunities. To restore dignity to vulnerable residents, this government is working hard to ensure housing beneficiaries receive their title deeds. I was with the hon Minister not so long ago in Paarl where we did exactly that. You hand over a housing unit. It has solar panels on the roof, it has low energy light bulbs, but it also comes with a title deed. That is how you really empower a citizen. In the last term, 17 705 title deeds were registered to these beneficiaries.

Hon Speaker, we will continue to innovate in this space, too. The Conradie site which is now in Phase 2, but in this term, we need to see many more Conradies going up: in the City centre, in town centres and across this Province.

Hon Speaker, just over two months ago, the hon Minister of Infrastructure, Tertuis Simmers and I officially opened the N7 Refinery Interchange. This

R250-million project was the product of years of meticulously planned hard work and aimed at connecting communities, enabling the economy. This interchange is far more than just tar, steel and cement. It should also be seen as an economic enabler linking citizens to economic opportunities. But also, in the planning of this bridge, it is not just a bridge. To see what goes into it and I spoke about future planning: the pipelines, the space for the data and technology underground cables. That is all planned in. So, you are planning for the future, planning to deal with more rain and more droughts. That is how we have got to build the infrastructure of the future.

Just this month, we gave an important update on the R640-million Malmesbury Bypass upgrade in the Swartland region. This upgrade is part of the Strategic Integration Project 5. It is a national infrastructure plan 2050 that is part of the projects of this province of how we link into that plan. Construction started in May 2023 and the project is expected to be completed by 2025.

Hon Speaker, our residents and specifically our youth, need skills to be enabled to participate in infrastructure-led growth. Hon Speaker, we will continue with the unique Western Cape Masakh'iSizwe Bursary Programme, enabling our future engineers. We will continue with the YearBeyond Programme. This programme focused at 18 to 25-year-olds, giving them a helping hand into their future. These young people are the needs [29.27], not education, employment or training.

In the last term, more than 10 000 Yeboneers benefitted from this programme. And hon Speaker, just recently, a week or two ago, the hon Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport handed over 1 000 youths at a conference, their starting certificates. This is much like the other projects that we lead. I will speak about the Day of 1 000 Opportunities, but initiatives like this and this conference was a launchpad for young people who are embarking on their journey into the future and into their careers.

The I-CAN Centre, hon Speaker, in Elsies River, has provided 15 000 skills development initiatives to date. Since 2020, the Western Cape Government's Experiential Learning programme has helped 12 420 young, unemployed South Africans mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, to secure permanent and contract jobs here in the Western Cape. Enabling Jobseekers Voucher which was launched a few months ago. We will continue to enable young people to get to opportunities, to get to that space where they can have an interview. And, of course, working with the private sector.

I mentioned the Day of 1 000 Jobs. It is interesting to see how that project, which started at the Athlone Stadium with the BPO Sector where we would call 1 000, sometimes 2 000 young people in one day to the Athlone Stadium, and 1 000 of them would be given a job in the back-office processing sector that very day. That project with the private sector, has expanded beyond BPO now and I now see the retail sector now using it as a space to draw young people into that sector. I see the finance sector is also using young people through the BPO who really excel and taking them up into the finance

sector. This is very exciting, and these are the gateway opportunities created, and we will continue to create many more of them in this term to come.

Hon Speaker, with energy security I spoke about water. Energy. We cannot grow our economy if we do not have affordable, decarbonised, reliable energy. Hon Speaker, we are close to four months now with no loadshedding and an improved energy availability factor, the EAF, which forms the generation perspective of our region, and that is really great news. But our country is still at risk. We still need to make sure that we keep the energy plans going. We need to, in the next five years, double down on our drive to make the Western Cape energy resilient by empowering the private sector to invest in renewable energy sources.

The 5 700-megawatt plan is still on track: small town, Riversdale. This project of how we can get a small town to be loadshedding-free and lead that charge. The land is identified. The electrical connection is identified. The support from this Government in enabling the procurement processes has been dealt with. The EIA very quickly dealt with and that project nicely on track.

Energy Council: this is still a space where all of this comes together. I am very pleased that the Minister of Energy and the Deputy Minister will again be joining our next Energy Council. It is the place that we hold each other accountable, get the job done, but also, bring in Eskom. I am actually quite

concerned with the number of breakages or breakdowns that Eskom has been experiencing over the last while, effecting our citizens and we need to have a discussion with them in that very space.

Our Energy Resilience Programme has already seen 2 000 megawatts of energy in development and last year alone, we saw 743 megawatts added to the Province's power system. According to NERSA, 39% of the total investment value of new generation projects amounting to over R7-billion registered from January to March this year, are here in the Western Cape. This has led to an installed capacity of 213 megawatts, of which 105 new generation facilities registered here in this Province.

We have also launched a wheeling toolkit. We support municipalities bringing in the World Bank, making sure that their project preparation and project management teams are in place. Our hospitals continue to roll out their energy systems and energy risk mitigation plans. The schools: I think about partnerships as well, not only just the government projects. I was in Cloetesville where the Stellenbosch University partnered with the Cloetesville school, and how they now have solar power battery systems, and they are able to sustain school while loadshedding happens.

Energy packs were handed out to Grade 1 and Grade 12 students in the lower quintile levels. GDD? Shelters and the elderly received energy packs and DGA to those last few also handed to Neighbourhood Watches. We backed our municipalities where they have SMME hubs and they have got solar

panels and battery systems, and of course, an SMME fund to help businesses sustain their businesses and many of them receive funding from this Government. We need to make sure that we are energy secure, and an energy secure future is the better place for investment.

Hon Speaker, all our efforts in this Government are ultimately aimed at enabling more jobs and the tourism sector remains a key sector and key job enabler. Hon Speaker, tourist arrivals have again, between January and March, grown by 16% year-on-year. We think about December where all records were broken of tourist arrivals and every single time that tourists arrive, we create more jobs. For every 100 international visitors, the Western Cape gains R2,1-million in direct tourism-spend, and adds R500 000 to GDP, and creates two more local jobs.

Hon Speaker, the Air Access Project again has brought more airlines and the latest of which is a direct flight from Lusaka, Eswatini and São Paulo. We saw in December 215 direct flights coming into Cape Town International Airport every single week.

Hon Speaker, our unique heritage in our province also plays a critical role in tourism. It is about who we are as people. On Friday, the 46th Session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee proclaimed World Heritage status for three sites in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. As part of the South African nomination: The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour. Our province was recognised, as well as KZN as I said, and hon Minister, thank

you very much for going to get this recognition ...[Applause.]

The Pinnacle Point Site Complex, the Diepkloof Rock Shelter in the Weskus, and the Sibudu Cave in KZN have all received this status, this global recognition. Thank you very much. This adds again to our offering when we sell to people coming from around the world to see who we are, and this tells the story of our past, and I really look forward to see how this builds to even a bigger story, because as we have said... [Interjection.]

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Speaker. [Applause.]

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

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes, Speaker, thank you Speaker, on a point of order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: On a point of order Speaker, on a point of order of relevance. We have communities that came to visit us here today to come to listen to a speech and plans for the Western Cape. On relevance can the Premier just please stop bragging and showing us a show of what we do not want to see. [Laughter.] Speaker, can the Premier please share the plans of the Western Cape. We want to hear that. Thank you,

Speaker. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon the Chief Whip. [Interjections.]
Order members! [Interjections.] Hon Chief Whip, you had an opportunity,
I recognised you. I have now – it is now my opportunity. [Interjections.]

Hon members, hon Chief Whip, you rose on a point of order and before I
could make a ruling you started interjecting. So that, firstly, that is not a
point of order, and I am not going to from the Chair dictate what the Premier
can and cannot say. You will have an opportunity to rebut that in your reply
tomorrow. That is not a point of order. Hon Premier, please continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much Speaker. Speaker, a safe province is a
prosperous province. For both visitors and residents, safety is an absolute
essential. I am very proud of our Law Enforcement Advancement
Plan (LEAP) and the leading partnership that we have with the City of Cape
Town. Since its inception our courageous men and women who are deployed
every day to some of our most crime-infested neighbourhoods across Cape
Town work tirelessly to make our communities and our community members
feel safe. Armed with data and evidence, technology and dedication our
LEAP officers have made more than 34 000 arrests and counting.

Beyond Cape Town our Provincial Rural Safety Units are on patrol in the
Swartland and the Overstrand Municipalities, with K9 Units now in
Swartland, Overstrand and Mossel Bay regions. In addition there are now 477

accredited Neighbourhood Watches in the province with more than 14 632 patrollers. They are a vital part of our safety and security network.

Speaker, to beat back crime we need adequate resources, and these remain a serious concern for me in our province. Our colleagues in the South African Police Service in the Western Cape are not properly resourced. The province's police-to-population ratio sits at around one officer to every 417 residents, well below the national ratio of 1 to 435. [Interjections.]

When you drill down to station level, the figures are even worse. At Cloetesville Police Station it is one officer to 1 228 citizens. In De Doorns it is one officer to 1 988 citizens. In Lwandle it is one officer to 958 citizens. But Speaker, I am encouraged by the Provincial Police Minister of Oversight and Community Safety, Minister Marais, who has just had a very positive meeting with the Western Cape Police Commissioner, and I am glad to see him here. Welcome General. But also with the National Minister, and I heard some interjections in this House, but my own interactions with Minister Mchunu have been good, and the meeting that you held between the City of Cape Town and the Province, what I am hearing out of that meeting really encourages me, because the Minister is saying, "let us have a look at a new model of policing in our country." [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The PREMIER: That really encourages me, and that again is something that

this province can benefit from this Government of National Unity.

[Interjections.]

You can definitely give that a hand. [Applause.]

But Speaker, I think this House must also play a stronger role, if that is the police-to-population ratio, we need to ask the questions because it is quite easy to change that, and oversight in this House really needs to make sure that we get that safety right for our citizens.

Speaker, helping the most vulnerable in our province, while we must do everything to fight crime, we also need to look at the conditions that our residents live in. Our Social Development Department is the heart of our Government. Where residents fall through the cracks of society our hard-working social workers are there to catch them. For the most vulnerable it is imperative that we help them get back on their feet.

Earlier this month, the Provincial Minister of Social Development, Jaco Londt, helped to officially reopen the newly refurbished Horizon Secure Care Centre here in Cape Town. It is one of seven such facilities in the province managed by the Department to assist youth who have been in conflict with the law.

Beyond the five newly built classrooms facilitated for vocational skills training and recreational offerings, among other features, this centre

represents the care and responsiveness our Government shows for people who need help in getting their lives back on track.

The daily reality for far too many people in our province may not necessarily mirror the successes of our Government. The cost-of-living crisis has too many households in a vicegrip. We may be creating jobs but too many residents are not feeling the relief of these economic opportunities. No one should go to bed hungry ever. Through growth we create food security; by enabling communities, we can feed our communities. To boost food production at the community level in the last term we supported 48 smallholder producers, 172 subsistence producers, and 3 308 households in the production of food resources like food gardens. You will see once we have finished with the M Tech processes and each Minister starts to deliver on their plans for the future, you will see how food security plays more and more of a role in how this Government goes to work every day.

Speaker, over the same period we have dished up cooked meals to those in need through 102 Community Nutrition and Development Centres and 358 Soup Kitchens across the province. At our schools more than 500 000 vulnerable learners receive free meals each year through the School Nutrition Programme.

As a team we have already agreed that the Ministers of Health, Education and Social Development will work together to identify these gaps and take our extensive feeding, current feeding schemes to the next level. We must fight

hunger with healthy affordable meals. We have to be innovative.

For example, one of the ideas is that the Minister of Education is going to look at how we can send a weekend meal home with that vulnerable child, because they get a meal every day at school but what happens on Saturday and Sunday. [Applause.]

Speaker, while I crisscrossed this province earlier this year, too many of our residents spoke to me about poor services they received from their municipality. [Interjections.]

There is a lot that we do in the Western Cape Government to hold municipalities to account and support them, because it is at Local Government level that many vital services are delivered. But Speaker, we know that we have to address Section 139 of the Constitution. It is not right that a province can step into a municipality when that municipality hits the wall, because services have long faded in that space. This is a discussion that we had with the Minister of CoGTA. This is a discussion that I have already started at PCC level, and in the latest GNU Lekgotla a few weeks ago, I raised this issue again. We have to relook at Section 139.

We think about how long it has taken just in Knysna, with the service delivery failures that those citizens have had to endure. It takes too long. We need to intervene in a far quicker way and a far more substantial way. But Speaker, while I am often frustrated I am also super proud of what our

municipalities do.

In March this year the results of the Independent Research Institute Good Governance Africa (GGA) 2024 Governance Performance Index (GPI) confirmed that many Western Cape municipalities are by far the best performing in our country. The index showed that Cape Town, the best performing Metro in South Africa recognised for high standards of service delivery; it recognised the top four district municipalities in South Africa, in the category of No Water Service Authority, and these are ranked from the top one being Cape Winelands, then West Coast, then Garden Route, and then the Overberg Municipality, the top four district municipalities in South Africa. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The PREMIER: The best three local municipalities in South Africa are also all from the Western Cape, Speaker. Swartland, Best Small Town; followed by Drakenstein, Best Secondary City; and then Saldana, Best Large Town in third place. Again this reflects the years of investment. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The PREMIER: This reflects the years of investment in our local governments and supporting them to serve our residents. Speaker, I feel such a sense of achievement and pride when I see the government, or I see

government done right, and I believe we are doing that here in the Western Cape, but while we have set the bar higher we must raise it even higher.

Since the Elections we have met as a Cabinet and with the provincial top management to set our priorities for this term. We have also as I have said met in the National Lekgotla; we have met and already started even before the election with the framework of our Provincial Strategic Plan. I am excited by now that the team is now looking at the challenge we face and how we find different ways of tackling the pressing issues that we face.

The Ministers will now be working with their teams and looking at how we land those programmes and policies in the Medium Term Budget Policy Framework (MTBPF) in October, as well as in the budgets that will be tabled next February. We also have to land them clearly in our PSP which will also be tabled in October. We will be also looking closely at the National Plan as it unfolds, and interesting there again, that for the first time this Province having seen that National Plan, we have been encouraged to put forward in writing any other suggestions that we want to put into that plan. That again gives me optimism and hope for this GNU and the future of our country, and this Province will play its part.

We spent days, nights, months and years putting systems and people in place so that we can enable our 90 000 teachers, nurses, doctors, road crews, social workers, traffic officers, our administrators and many, many more, to work for all the residents of the Western Cape, particularly the vulnerable who rely

so heavily on Government services. I thank each of you for your service to the people. I thank my office, my family.

Speaker, I thank all of your partners and your families who also play their part enabling all of us as servants of the people of this province.

Speaker, we have done so much already, but we cannot afford to rest and let our guard down. We must work harder than ever before with the purpose and determination to ensure our province and citizens keep succeeding.

Speaker, I have no delusions about the challenges that lie ahead, or the crises we may face. When I took the Premier's oath of office five years ago I swore to uphold and protect the dignity of all of our citizens. This has not changed. I have faith in our remarkable province and country, because I have seen first-hand what is possible when we work with purpose and dedication.

Speaker, in this term of the Seventh Administration as we move forward, let us not squander this moment in our country's history. Let us show that the centre can hold against extremist forces on the right and the left that seek to divide us and act in the interests of the minority, not the majority of our residents. [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yebo!

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The PREMIER: Speaker, let us work together with renewed purpose and commitment in the service of the people of our beautiful country and this beautiful province. I thank you. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon members, in terms of Rule 15 of the Standing Rules the Premier's Opening Address will be placed on the Order Paper for debate.

Hon members and guests, you are requested to remain standing in your places while the procession leaves the Chamber.

I would like to invite all members and guests for some refreshments after the adjournment of the House in the members' dining room on this floor and hon members please note that on Thursday, 1 August 2024, the proceedings will commence at 9:30.

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

The House adjourned at 12:02.