



POLICY & BUDGET

Speech 2023/24



public works,
roads & transport
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





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MEC: Public Works, Roads and Transport



POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH

2023/24

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Honourable Speaker - Ms. Makhosazana Masilela
- Honourable Deputy Speaker - Ms. Jeanette Thabethe- Mofokeng
- Honourable Premier - Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane
- Chief Whip of the majority party Mr Fidel Mlombo
- Honourable Members of the Executive Council
- Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature
- Honourable Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Transport Ms Norah Mahlangu, as well as Members of the Committee
- Chairperson of House of Traditional Leaders Kgoshi Mokoena and Members of the House of Traditional Leaders
- Executive Mayors and Councillors present
- Director General of the Province - Mr Makhukhu Mampuru
- Head of the Department - Mr Charles Morake Morolo, Senior Managers and all employees of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport
- Heads of Departments and Chief Executive Officers of Entities
- Leadership of the ANC and the alliance partners
- Leadership of Santaco and NTA
- Comrades and Compatriots
- Leadership of the Taxi and Bus Industries
- Invited guests and all participants on various virtual platforms
- Representatives of the Media



▪ Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Honourable Speaker, it is a rare pleasure for us to present an annual budget of “governance” of the government, the people in an important month, which is celebrated annually, the **Youth Month**.
2. We celebrate the contribution made by the youth of our beloved country in the struggle for the total emancipation of the historically marginalized, dispossessed and displaced by the apartheid government. We celebrate the youth mindful of the huge and urgent task confronting all of us, as a nation-**Youth Unemployment**.
3. This is the task that gives us sleepless nights, for there can be no guarantee for a stable and brighter future under these prevailing conditions. The voice of an unemployed youth is voiceless, he can't even express the beauty of his own small family.
4. Unemployment, beyond it being a socio-economic issue, at personal level, it takes away what is at the core of humanity, which is honor, morale and dignity. It negates hopes. It forestalls talents, creative minds, and many brilliant, promising minds end in squalor.
5. We have to do something to uplift our young people out of this sorrowful and painful situation.
6. The Department needs a different type of a man, modest, honest and informed, man that will be distinguishable by his or her actions. A man that wakes up everyday, work very hard to ensure that our roads are smooth, well-constructed, potholes are patched, ensures that passengers are safe on our roads and our projects are completed on time. A man that participates in the important project of building a better life for all.
7. Honourable members, former ANC President OR Tambo warned us that, “Wait until you are in power. I might be dead by then. At that stage, you will realise that it is actually more difficult to keep the power than to wage a liberation war. People will be expecting a lot of services from you. You will have to satisfy the various demands of the masses of our people.”
8. These hopes are not misplaced. Our people expect more from us because they have trust in our capacity to do so. They are with us in the understanding that fundamental change takes time, and that this too, is not reason for complacency.



9. “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek” Barack Obama said.

MTSF 2019-2024 OVERVIEW

10. Madam Speaker when we began our journey into freedom and democracy in 1994, our sacrosanct mission has been to build a **Better Life for All**. This is not a value-free commitment. Therefore, building a better Life for All is a commitment of the Liberation movement turned government.
11. For the past 29 years, the governing Party has been paying special attention on the complex program of transformation and redress. This month, we are a year before the 2024 general elections, our account here bring to close the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024 of the 6th Administration. Our presentation today takes this into account.
12. Covid-19 defocused all of us from the MTSF towards the health crisis. Once the pandemic subsided, Mpumalanga had to manage the transition following the economic and social interruptions. In response, the province is implementing the Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (MERRP) to re-ignite its economy.
13. The economy of the province is shrinking. Infrastructure acts as a support system for production activity in the economy and thereby contributes to economic development. Infrastructure increases productivity, encourages investment, generates linkages in production and enhances size of the market.
14. Central to this plan is massive infrastructure rollout which will have substantial long-term impacts on economic growth, social equity and job creation. We are revising the Mpumalanga Infrastructure Master Plan (MIMP) which is to be completed by the end of July 2023.
15. This plan provides an overview of the infrastructure and spatial development goals of the Province. Moreover, it supports the District Development Model (DDM) to address the lack of coherent planning in Government’s projects and programmes. Also, Infrastructure South Africa has assisted the province to build capacity to develop bankable project pipelines. These collaborative efforts in infrastructure planning, budgeting and implementation are aimed at facilitating the delivery of sustainable social infrastructure as well as achievement of envisaged socio-economic outcomes.



16. We support the vision of the Minister to reduce spending on rentals. We are paying bonds for land lords. As a province we are building the state of the art parliamentary village to accommodate all our public representatives, the project will be completed by the end of the year.
17. We also intend to enter into an arrangement with property investors that will provide the department an opportunity to rent property for an agreed period, at the end the property will be transferred to the Department, we are resuscitating a well-articulated deserted programme, BOT (Build Operate and Transfer). We have to enter into a mutual relationship, not parasitic nor commensalism, we have to benefit from the relationship, all of us.
18. We are willing to utilize the front loading funding concept which can assist the Department to accelerate building our own offices whilst protecting the cash flow of the Department.
19. The Department is pleased to report that Mpumalanga has successfully registered 14 projects with Infrastructure South Africa (ISA). Seven of these projects **(including Coal Haulage Road Rehabilitation Programme)** were submitted to the Budget Facility Infrastructure (BFI) of National Treasury.
20. Notwithstanding this, our infrastructure needs are increasing and our people are growing impatient. This state of affairs requires concerted efforts from both the public and private sectors. Accordingly, efforts have been made by National Treasury to explore alternative means of infrastructure funding through reforms which were introduced to attract private sector financing.

BUILDING A CAPABLE STATE

21. Speaker, to build a better life for all, requires a strong, democratic, capable, ethical and a developmental state which constructs and deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of economic development. This is the most important enabling factor for the realization of the NDP, MTSF and MERRP priorities.
22. In pursuance of this objective, we advertised 583 vaccant positions from salary level 2 to 12. The Department managed to fill 170 positions and concluded interviews for 262 positions. Overall, we have completed 432 positions, equivalent to 74%.



23. The Department is earmarking positions which will strengthen its capacity to fulfill its mandate. These positions include 18 Boiler Operators, 9 Assistant Boiler Operators, 221 Road Workers, 20 Grounds men, 20 Cleaners and other critical personnel at our regional mechanical workshops.
24. At the heart of this noble programme of building a capable, ethical and developmental state, is the prioritization of the principle of meritocracy when appointing senior managers. The Department commits to appoint individuals with the talent, integrity, morality and strong leadership in the Department. In April 2023, we advertised 7 Senior Management posts to strengthen our capacity at management level.
25. However, the Department was advised to revisit the number of all advertised posts and establish if the latest 7.5% wage settlement does not affect its wage bill. The Department is pleased to announce that it will proceed with its recruitment processes since our wage bill is far below the norm. We want to strengthen the Department to be able to discharge its responsibilities than to overly rely on service providers.
26. That said, several pockets of excellence exist in the Department. We are collaborating with the Council for Built Environment (CBE), to support our technical staff to obtain professional registration in an effort to improve infrastructure delivery and performance.
27. Through our Young Professionals Programme, we recruited 32 technical graduates to be given work experience in order to prepare them for their professional registration. The Department further intends to enter into a partnership with respective professional firms and contractors that are working in the province to absorb a further 200 technical graduates to gain work experience and prepare them for registration.
28. Moreover, the Department has partnered with Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) and Bank Sector Education and Training Authority (BankSETA) to massify job creation opportunities for the youth. The Department intends to place 300 interns in various disciplines during the current financial year.
29. CETA also funds our learnerships programme which will benefit 700 unemployed youth. This programme will give 300 young people work experience in Roads Construction projects, 100 in Short Skills Programme, 150 in Learnerships, 100 in Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning and 50 in TVET Placement.



30. Furthermore, the Department is engaging with (Transport Education and Training Authority) TETA and (Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (MerSETA) to fund placement of 100 artisans in mechanical, instrumentation, plumbing and welding.
31. This artisan skills programme is vital for the successful implementation of infrastructure development and promote artisanship as a career of choice to the youth of Mpumalanga.
32. The Department has a close working relationship with Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA). Jointly, we trained 100 traffic officers last year of which 98 successfully completed their studies. We are in a process of placing these traffic officers.
33. Madam Speaker, in 2022/23 financial year the Department facilitated the training of 996 beneficiaries in all the Departmental training programmes. For the 2023/24 financial year the number has increased by 114 to 1110. We are committed to empower the youth with education and experience. The idea is to offer every young person who is willing to work an opportunity to participate in building the province.
34. Participants in these targeted skills development programmes have the opportunity to equip themselves with knowledge and skills. The Department is grateful to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) for partnering with us. We call upon social partners to also provide opportunities to our youth to gain knowledge and placement in their programmes as part of their corporate social responsibility.
35. The Department has multi-skilling programmes targeting existing staff. For the 2022/23 financial year, approximately R1, 2 million was invested in formal learning and development of employees. For the 2023/24 financial year, R3,1 million is set aside to capacitate our employees.
36. Madam Speaker, there are three forces that influences the service delivery model that the Department has opted. **Firstly**, the impact of Covid-19 on service delivery. The pandemic has magnified Mpumalanga's social and economic crises, further straining the public purse.
37. With more demand for spending, it is more critical to ensure that the Department spends within its means to get the expected outcomes. There is a need for us to always seek value for money and constantly strive to improve and innovate, so that we can do more with less.



38. **Secondly**, the rise of digital technology has been a powerful influence on how we work. Technology has become an increasingly important part of service delivery and a critical tool for our workforce.
39. The 4th Industrial Revolution has led to a quantum leap as far as adoption of ICT solutions, as we seek to be more responsive and effective. Inherently, this has led to increase the budgets for hardware and software equipments.
40. **Thirdly**, the adoption of the integrated governance approach is necessary as per the District Development Model (DDM). South Africa is a unitary state, with three (3) interrelated, interdependent spheres of government, with clear and well defined roles and responsibilities. We should review and align our operations to achieve one plan, one budget.
41. There is a lack of effective coordination between Head Office, our regions, and cost centres, thus the review of our institutional arrangement. Preliminary reviews of the organizational structure have commenced to ensure the “new” integrated approach of government.
42. Equally, the availability of plant and equipment forms the backbone of provision of integrated service delivery. For roads maintenance, there are standard minimum requirements for a region or cost centre to function optimally.
43. We will establish one team per Region, each team will have a minibus to transport road-workers to site whereas atleast a grader, tipper truck, water tanker, TLB, roller, excavator, front end loader, lowbed and pothole patching machine are required to enhance the condition of the road network.
44. We will equip all our regions and cost centres with human personnel and working tools to fulfill our mandate. For this financial year we envisage to have our cost centres operating at an optimal level.
45. The Department experiences breakdowns of its plant and this has a ripple effect, less time is spent at work and more funds for plant hire. We are resuscitating our regional workshops to service, repair and conduct maintenance of government fleets especially those that are outside of warrant.
46. For this financial year, the Department will rollout network connectivity to seven (7) sites, Mayflower, Driekoppies, Acornhoek, Malamule, Vaalbank, Greylingstad and Belfast. This initiative will not only enable deployment of the Maintenance Management System (MMS) in these cost centres but other transversal systems as well.



47. Honourable Speaker, conflicts of interest is a problem that affects our institutions. We urge all our public representatives and public servants to develop the consciousness to respect that we are entrusted to distribute the resources of our people. We should prioritize our people not ourselves. Leaders eat last. We are all called to give services not to be serviced.
48. Corruption has a potential to derail the creation of **A Better Life for All**. It is a cancer that we have to deal with. Various internal controls are in place to mitigate against corruption. Government has made financial disclosures mandatory for the following groups. These are SMS members, management at level 9 - 12, Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) officials, all officials in Supply Chain Management, Financial Accounting and Expenditure Sections as well as Ethics Officers. This and other controls (such as policies, standard operating procedures, etc.) will go a long way towards regaining client, and more specifically, public trust.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

49. Madam Speaker, since 1994 the government has been involved in numerous social infrastructure programmes to improve the provision of basic rights and address inequalities. Over the last 29 years, the Department has been in the forefront to support a massive push of addressing infrastructure backlogs.
50. For the 2022/23 financial year the Department administered R2, 680 billion for building and maintenance of **social infrastructure**. This amount was directed towards the completion of 149 projects and for other multi-year projects which are continuous.
51. The Department completed 134 projects for the Department of Education, 3 for Health, 3 for Culture Sport and Recreation, 2 for Social Development and 7 maintenance projects for Public Works, Roads and Transport. Through this capital investments the Department supported job creation, economic empowerment and spatial transformation.
52. The projects that the Department completed for the Department of Education include the provision of basic services and sanitation in 64 schools. The Department also handed over the following schools to the Department of Education: Msholozhi, Doornkop and Mpisi – Jameyana Schools, as per SOPA 2023 announcement. Additional classes were also completed to address the growing demand for schools in fast growing towns: Nelspruit Primary, Laerskool Bergland and Laerskool Nelspruit. The classes at Laerskool Laeveld will be completed in the 2023/24 financial year.



53. The Honourable Speaker, the Department completed health facilities and handed them to the Department of Health for utilization, Bethal Hospital, emergency repairs and installation of lifts at Standerton Hospital and Innovative Building Technology structures for Kwamhlanga Hospital.
54. Among other projects that the Department completed includes the electrical and water reticulation for Swartfontein Treatment Centre, a new library in Schoemansdal, upgrading of eMalahleni Library, storm damage repairs at Standerton Regional Library and 7 maintenance projects at KwaMhlanga Government Complex.
55. Madam Speaker, the Department commits to monitor the completion of the following multi-year projects as per the revised completion dates.
- Middelburg Hospital (85%)
 - Mmamethake Hospital (95%)
 - Mkhondo Boarding School (89%)
 - Rob Ferreira Hospital Phase A, B and C (93%)
 - New Mpumalanga Parliamentary Village Phase 2 (90%) and phase 3 (70%)
 - Daantjie Youth Development Centre (98%) and Msogwaba Youth Development Centre (83%)
 - New Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market (85%)
56. There are other projects that the Department is intending to implement in the 2023/24 financial year, 178 projects are at designs stage, 164 construction and 5 maintenance projects: A total of 121 projects are for the Department of Education, 11 for Health, 12 for Culture, Sport and Recreation, 5 for Social Development and 15 special projects for the Department.
57. Apart from being an implementing agent, the Department serves as custodian of all Mpumalanga Provincial Government Immovable Assets. While we are the owner, we rely heavily on availability of funds from user departments to do the required maintenance works. By investing in maintenance, we preserve the lifespan of our assets.
58. Honourable Speaker, in the past 12 months, we conducted an assessment on the condition of 120 properties across the province. The Department periodically interacts with all user departments to discuss and advise on User Asset Management Plans (UAMPS) in line with Government Immovable Asset Management Act (GIAMA).



59. On the other hand, the Department prioritizes the **disposal of all non-core fixed property assets** which are overburdening our maintenance budget. There is a total of 1 338 state-owned houses in the province. The costs of maintenance and administration of these houses far exceed the income generated from rental collection.
60. A total of 169 houses were identified for the first phase of disposal. This matter is in a process to be re-addressed with the Executive Council taking into consideration the proposal made by organized labour. This move is geared towards the effective and efficient management of state housing portfolio.
61. The Department has already transferred other immovable properties to various municipalities. 8 Farms for tenure upgrading and township development. A total of 04 ervens were transferred for taxi ranks development and 02 other properties are ready for registration for township and taxi rank development.
62. We are committed to support the **land reform agenda** by releasing land parcels for human settlement, redistribution and restitution. Properties transferred from one sphere to other spheres of government are donated to them for the achievement of their core functions.

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

63. Honourable members, transport infrastructure is the heartbeat and the pulse of economic growth. For 2022/23 financial year, R1, 436 billion was spent towards the completion of 13 transport infrastructure projects, this includes 8 roads projects and 5 Integrated Rural Mobility and Access (IRMA) projects.

The Department completed the following projects:

- Rehabilitation of Road P95/1 between Verena Crossing to Gauteng Boundary Phase 2
- Reconstruction of flood damaged Culvert on Road D2296 at Tekwane
- Upgrading of Rural Road D281 between Volksrust and Daggakraal
- Repair of Sinkhole on Road P9/1 Graskop
- Emergency Repairs on Road D1043 (R65) between Graskop and Hazyview
- Special Maintenance of Road P170/1 between Matibidi and Graskop
- Rehabilitation of Road D3930 from Acornhoek to D3932 (Cottondale)
- Upgrading of Road D2952 from Masibekela (D2950) to Thambokhulu Phase 2



- Dr Pixley Ka Seme Bus Shelters (IRMA)
 - Dr JS Moroka Bus Shelters (IRMA)
 - Kanyamazane Culvert (IRMA)
 - Carolina Culvert (IRMA)
 - Agincourt Culvert (IRMA)
64. The expenditure for 2022/23 includes multi-year capital projects undertaken on access, tourism, coal haulage and flood damaged roads. Several road maintenance activities such as patching of potholes, resealing of surfaced roads, regravelling and blading of gravel road were also funded to improve access and mobility.
65. While we focus on the new financial year, we should complete the following multi-year projects during the 2023/24 financial year:
- Block paving of Road D3976 Mathibela Phase1 (1 km)
 - Block paving of Road D567 Moloto Village Phase 2 (1 km)
 - Block paving of Road D1875 between Gemsbokspruit and Tweefontein Phase 2 (2 km)
 - Block paving of Road D1875 between Gemsbokspruit and Tweefontein Phase 3 (0.4km)
 - Rehabilitation of Road D1723 eMoyeni between D636 and P258/1
 - Reconstruction of Culvert on Road D2946 Gomora
 - Reconstruction of Culvert on Road D4415 Kashoty
 - Reconstruction of Culvert on Road D282 Daggakraal
 - Upgrading of road D2950, Mananga (6 km)
 - Construction of bridge and extra lane on Road D4400 over Sand River Bridge near Rolle Village
 - Construction of Kumani bridge and upgrading of road D4422 in Thulamahashe
 - Upgrading of Road D481 Embhuleni to Maanaar (7 km)
 - Upgrading of Coal Haul Road D2274 between N11 and Hendrina (13 km) incl. two new bridges and one culvert
 - Rehabilitation of Coal Haul Road P36/1 between Delmas and N12 (9.1 km)
 - Rehabilitation of Coal Haul Road P29/1 Delmas (12.55 km)
 - Rehabilitation of tourism road P8/1 Mashishing to Bambi Phase 3 (11 km)
 - Rehabilitation of Road D2486 N2 to Klipwal Phase 1 (9 km)



66. For the year 2023/24, R1, 95 billion has been made available to construct, upgrade and maintain the provincial road network.

The following multi-year projects will **commence** in the current financial year:

- Construction of the Driekoppies Dam Bridge
- Construction of a Road over Rail Bridge on Road P100 in Emalahleni (Civic Bridge)
- Rehabilitation of Road P216/1 eMbalenhle to Secunda (km 0.0 to km 9.67) (9.67 km)
- Rehabilitation of tourism Road P171/1 between Lydenburg and Rossenekaal (*PPP*)
- Upgrading of Road D2950 from D797 to Dhludluma incl. Ring Road (8 km) Phase 1
- Upgrading of Gedlembane Road in Pienaar (4.75 km)
- Upgrading of Road D2952 from Masibekela (D2950) to Thambokhulu (1 km) Phase 3
- Upgrading of Road D4382 between Belfast and Justicia (13.60 km)
- Upgrading of Road D3954 and D3958 between Casteel and Zoeknog (9.0 km)
- Upgrading of Road D2902 from D2904 (km 11.07) Ramokgeletsane to D2900 (km 19.56) Senotlelo (8.49 km)
- Rehabilitation of Tourism Road P33/4 between Hazyview and Sabie from km 36.0 to km 43.7 (7.7 km) Phase 2
- Rehabilitation of Coal Haulage Road P26/5 from km 16 at D1388 to km 26 at P52/1 between Carolina and Breyten (8.94 km) Phase 1
- Upgrading of Road D2915 in Zithabiseni from Bundu to R25 (9km) Phase 1 (1 km)

67. Honourable Speaker, the Department always works very hard to deliver preventative and routine maintenance on the provincial road network. For 2022/23 financial year a budget of R281 million is allocated for regional infrastructure maintenance, which increases to R336 million for 2023/24 financial year.

68. The Department acknowledges that everyone speaks about potholes on our roads. Government is at the stage where it is intensifying its maintenance activities. SANRAL is tasked to lead the labour-intensive national programmes, called S'hamba Sonke and Vala Zonke programmes.



69. Yesterday, Mpumalanga had a privilege of hosting the Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga during her oversight visit on the two programmes. The Minister has encouraged the province to identify roads to be handed over to SANRAL. Amongst these roads include Mkhondo to Mahamba road P130/1, Mkhondo to Swaziland D526, Machado to Badplaas P180/1 as well as Ermelo/ Carolina and Machado Road P26/4, 5 and 6.
70. At a provincial level, the Department is supporting districts and local municipalities with road infrastructure planning and yellow fleet management strategies to augment municipal capacity gaps. It is a classic case of the District Development Model (DDM) at play!
71. We have already distributed the 4 mechanical pothole patching vehicles to regional maintenance teams in support of our intensified war against potholes. Our expectation is that here in Mpumalanga when we wake up every day, we should work very hard to close potholes.
72. Honourable Speaker, this sitting has the commitment to prioritize the needs of the 4.7 million population of Mpumalanga province. The demand is more and the resources are limited. It is therefore encouraging that our public private partnership initiatives are starting to bear results. This year, the mining houses around Thaba Chweu have pledged to contribute 60% towards the rehabilitation cost for road P171/1 which extends between Dullstroom to Rossenekaal Junctions.
73. The high traffic volumes and heavy trucks place an extra burden on the maintenance and rehabilitation demands of provincial roads. The reality is that Department's budget baseline is not sufficient to carry the costs alone, therefore, we invite the private sector to join hands and contribute towards improving our road network. In future, more will be done to promote the **Adopt a Road Programme**.

CLIMATE CHANGE

74. Madam Speaker, **climate change** threatens to erode government gains since it is causing extreme events which are negatively impacting on our public infrastructure such as buildings, bridges and roads. When infrastructure development is disrupted, it has an impact on other sectors such as the economic and public health sectors.



75. Therefore, we are taking action to mitigate the risk of climate change and strengthen climate-resilience infrastructure. New infrastructure assets are now designed, built and operated to account for the climate changes that may occur over their lifespan. Building infrastructure, particularly our offices and public facilities need to be retrofitted or managed differently, given the effects of climate change.
76. Consequently, this has led to increase in the investment for adaptation strategies. Renewable energy has become fundamental for public buildings to improve their energy security situation. To this extent, the province has set aside R70 million to facilitate installation of solar energy in the following facilities.
- Renewable Energy for health facilities includes Mmamethake Hospital and Riverside Government Complex.
77. Envisaged socio-economic benefits of this programme include small enterprises that can supply panels and installation jobs opportunities to at least 1 000 young people.
78. We have to move with speed because the situation right now is that generators provide emergency power for some public buildings but these have a negative environmental impact. In addition to harmful pollutants, the cost of keeping these going is astronomical and it is not sustainable. More funds are required for diesel budgets and refurbishment of old generators.
79. We are all expected to change our posture and focus on the reduction of fossil fuel emissions and pursue projects that are sustainable to the environment. To this regard, we are packaging plans that will enable the province to access grants from international funders which are set aside for the Just Transition Energy Programme.
80. On water efficiency solutions, the Department is collaborating with Bidvest and Enviro loo to provide appropriate sanitation facilities to schools. On 01 June 2023, we jointly handed over the upgraded Waste Treatment Plant at eThembeni Primary School.
81. This plant is a new generation, closed circuit, 100% recycling, sanitation system that offers an aspirational quality flushing toilet experience by treating wastewater and killing pathogens through a natural biological process.



82. This project will improve hygiene, learner performance, class attendance and retention of teachers. Along the many other-mentioned projects, these form part of the Provincial Climate Change Mitigation Strategy. We are also finalizing strategies for water supply and waste management as part of the **Resource Efficiency Programme**.
83. Honourable members, climate change has different implications for various sectors. In recent months, Mpumalanga has experienced devastating **heatwaves and floods**. The declaration of the State of Disaster at least allowed the province to reprioritize its budgets and allocate funding for the disaster interventions.
84. National government has made additional funding available in the current financial year to mitigate the impact. More relief measures will be deployed to affected communities after assessment of the extent of the damage.
85. Key among government programs is the Welisizwe Rural Bridge Programme which focuses on the construction of modular steel bridges (rural access bridges) in communities that have been cut off from social amenities. A budget of R190 million has been made available to install 17 bridges across Mpumalanga.
86. Honourable members, it is our intention to do everything possible to deliver projects on time, within budget and of superior quality. To avoid unnecessary overruns, all departments have to pay invoices within the prescribed 30 days period. We are doing our part to strengthen project and contract management.
87. Let us also welcome the decision by the Executive Council to approve the use of multiple implementing agents for infrastructure delivery in the province. The Development Bank for Southern Africa (DBSA) and Independent Development Trust (IDT) will complement the existing technical capacity of the Province in expediting infrastructure delivery.

INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM

88. Madam Speaker, the delivery of reliable customer focused public transport services is a priority of this Department. We are working hard to create an integrated public transport system that is safe and reliable.
89. We have set aside R742 million to benefit approximately 135 000 commuters who use buses on a daily basis. In addition, approximately R462 million has been made available for the transportation of approximately 63 000 learners to various schools.



90. As part of building internal capacity, we are forging ahead with our efforts to insource the monitoring of scholar transport services. More so, because law enforcement is a core mandate of the transport inspectorate unit. We will be ready to recruit the required traffic officers once all the modalities of such a move have been completed.
91. Madam Speaker, According to the Statistics SA 2020 Household Survey, taxi operators transport over 15 million commuters every day while bus operate transport around 4.7 million commuters, which contribute 19.8% of the public transport users. Children get to and from school every day and adults are able to get to work so that they can provide for their families. The minibus taxi industry currently provides employment for 650 000 people who currently work as taxi drivers, queue marshals, car washers and informal vendors in taxi ranks, as well as administrative support.
92. Unlocking economic opportunities and enabling the taxi economic participation in the mainstream economy remains an important part of transforming the public transport industry. The Department will continue to work very closely with the taxi industry to address and resolve all challenges facing the industry.
93. On the 6-7 June 2023, The Department convened a **Taxi Indaba** where stakeholders (71 associations, government, commuters and private sector) gathered to discuss matters that affect their industry. The event was graced by our Honourable Premier of the Province: Ms Refilwe Mtshweni -Tshipane who encouraged all delegates to forge ahead with unity.
94. In the main, the indaba was centered on formalizing and professionalizing the industry. We also sought to establish progress on the implementation of resolutions that were taken in the Taxi Lekgotla held in 2020 and Provincial Lekgotla in 2015. In summary the indaba agreed on the following new resolutions amongst others:
- **One Municipality – One Taxi Association**
 - Establishment of a **Provincial Panel of Eminent People (PPEP)** to deal with issues of unity and leadership.
 - Organise Taxi Industry **Business Summit** - to identify business opportunities within the industry
 - **Education campaign** on public transport regulations and gazetting of applications for operating licenses.



95. Honourable members, this was not another talk show. We are going to appoint a task team to track implementation of all resolutions and report to us on a quarterly basis. Let me take this opportunity to thank our taxi associations and operators for the robust engagements during the two days event.
96. Honourable Speaker, the Department has made great strides to ensure an inclusive, safe and reliable transport system. We are working with municipalities to develop their **Integrated Transport Plans (ITPs)**.
97. At National level, the Department of Transport (DOT) is processing the **Public Transport Subsidy Policy**, which will be published for comments soon after approval by Cabinet. We are also supporting the parliamentary processes of the **Transport Economic Regulation Bill** as well as the **National Land Transport Amendment Bill**, for approval by March 2024.

JOB CREATION

98. Madam Speaker, unemployment remains a massive challenge for the province, especially in terms of the youth. There is an opportunity to boost economic growth, increase employment and reduce poverty through the Premier's Job Massification programme as part of the provincial nine point plan.
99. The Department is proud to implement 12 of the 21 programmes that the Honourable Premier announced in her State of the Province Address. Most of these programmes are dedicated to youth empowerment.
100. Through the **Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)** we will continue to create work and training opportunities for the poor, youth, women and disabled. A total of 15 576 work opportunities were created for the youth, 22 661 for women and 198 for disabled persons. The work opportunities were created in three sectors, Infrastructure (44%), Social (31%) and Environment and Culture (25%). The programme in total, benefitted local communities through the creation of 35 027 EPWP jobs across the province. The total departmental contribution was 8 310 jobs.
101. The rollout of EPWP projects provides for local small-medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) with an opportunity to participate in the mainstream economy. Economic empowerment legislation ensures that there is transformation on the built industry through appointment of previously marginalized groups.



102. In this financial year, the Department intends to create 15 832 of the 45 925 provincial work opportunities through the enrollment of 10 000 Siyatentela Roads Maintenance beneficiaries, 500 Building Infrastructure beneficiaries, 3 335 Roads Projects beneficiaries, 153 RGC Maintenance beneficiaries, 350 National Youth Service beneficiaries, 400 Scholar Transport beneficiaries, 59 Sakh'bakhi Contractors, 300 Interns, 700 Learners and 35 Roads National Contractor Development Programme participants.
103. Honourable members, poverty, inequality and unemployment are the most pressing challenges we face since the advent of the new democratic dispensation. Reducing this triple challenge continues to be the overriding concern of our development policies and programs, from the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 to the current National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP).
104. The guiding principle, as captured in the NDP, is that *“no political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must be the first priority of a democratic government”*.

CONCLUSION

105. As I conclude Madam Speaker, allow me to express my gratitude to the ANC and the Honourable Premier; Ms Refilwe Mthsweni-Tsipane for entrusting me with this critical portfolio. I appreciate the continuous support of the HOD, Mr MC Morolo, Senior Management and the entire staff. Further appreciation is extended to the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Transport; Community Safety, Security and Liaison under the leadership of Honourable Ms Norah Mahlangu, the Select Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) chaired by Honourable Vusi Mkhathshwa. I also thank the Audit and Risk Committees for their objective oversight on our operations.

BUDGET

106. Madam Speaker, the Department's overall budget allocation for 2023/24 experienced an increase of R473 million or 9, 5% when compared to the main appropriation budget in 2022/23 financial year. The increase is mainly on the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant which has seen a substantial increase of R 546 million to almost R 1,452 billion.



107. I beg this House to consider and approve the budget of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Vote 8, which is as follows:

1. Administration	R358, 440, 000.00 (Three hundred and fifty eight million, four hundred and forty thousand rands)
2. Public Works Infrastructure	R 1,146,156.00 (One billion, one hundred and forty six million, one hundred and fifty six thousand rands)
3. Transport Infrastructure	R 2,487,214.00 (Two billion, four hundred and eighty seven million, two hundred and fourteen thousand rands)
4. Transport Operations	R 1, 379,206.00 (One billion, three hundred and seventy nine million, two hundred and six thousand rands)
5. Community Based Programme	R95, 767,000.00 (Ninety five million, seven hundred and sixty seven thousand rands)
TOTAL	R 5,466,783, 000 (Five billion, four hundred and sixty six million, seven hundred and eighty three thousand rands)

108. Don't wait for me, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek" Barack Obama said.

109. I urge all of us not to think that I have all the solutions, we must all participate in finding solutions for the future of the province.

110. We've been conditioned to think that only politicians can solve our problems. But at some point, maybe we will wake up and recognize that it was the politicians who created our problems" Ben Carson.

I thank you!









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Mpumalanga Department
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“Let’s Grow Mpumalanga Together”



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