



public works,
roads & transport

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND TRANSPORT SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON MISLEADING REPORTING REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport has noted with serious concern the misleading and selective reporting published by *Lowvelder* on 14 May 2026 under the headline: “*R5.5bn spent, little delivered: Mpumalanga Roads Department under fire for stalled projects and audit issues.*”

The Department rejects the distorted impression created by the article, which unfairly presents a negative narrative while deliberately ignoring the significant service delivery progress made during the 2024/25 financial year.

The Department wishes to place the following facts on record:

1. Strong Financial Performance and Responsible Spending

The Department spent 96.4% of its allocated budget, which reflects sound fiscal discipline and a deliberate commitment to ensuring public resources are directed towards service delivery. This expenditure was achieved within applicable public finance prescripts and does not amount to wasteful expenditure as implied.

2. High Performance Target Achievement

The Department successfully achieved 33 out of 42 annual performance targets (79%), which is a commendable performance within a challenging operating environment characterised by economic pressures, project disruptions, adverse weather conditions, and national capacity constraints affecting strategic infrastructure delivery.

To characterise this as “failure” is both misleading and disingenuous.



3. Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme Challenges are Nationally Coordinated Constraints

The article fails to acknowledge that the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme is implemented in partnership with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) under a nationally coordinated framework.

Delays experienced are not unique to Mpumalanga and are linked to national operational capacity limitations currently being addressed collaboratively by all affected stakeholders. Despite these constraints, other projects were completed and progress continues, communities will benefit from these critical access structures.

4. Major Infrastructure Projects Remain Active and Progressing

The Department rejects suggestions that projects have been abandoned or neglected.

Projects remain under active implementation, with delays largely attributable to community disruptions, contractor performance interventions, design adjustments and weather-related interruptions challenges common across large-scale infrastructure environments.

5. Audit Matters are Receiving Focused Attention

The Department acknowledges audit findings and has implemented structured audit action plans to address all identified matters.

The opening irregular expenditure balance referenced includes legacy matters under investigation and does not imply current wrongdoing or financial misconduct.

The Department continues working closely with oversight institutions to strengthen governance, internal controls, and consequence management systems.

6. Municipal Accounts and Scholar Transport are Provincial Priorities

The Department is engaging municipalities through structured payment arrangements to resolve municipal debt challenges affecting government facilities. It must be noted that due to budgetary constraints the Department cannot address the matter overnight.

On scholar transport, the Department continues to work with the Provincial Treasury and the Department of Education to expand funding support due to the growing demand hence budget allocation remains a challenge. The Department continues to ensure learner safety remains protected.

Political Commentary Must Not Replace Facts

The Department notes that much of the article relies heavily on politically charged commentary from opposition representatives, presented as fact without balanced verification from the Department's broader performance record.

For the record, the Moloto Road development forms part of a national infrastructure programme implemented under the authority of the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL), and not the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.

It is therefore deeply concerning and regrettable that public representatives entrusted with oversight responsibilities fail to distinguish between the constitutional functions of provincial government and those of national entities.

Such confusion reflects either a serious lack of understanding of government operations or a deliberate attempt to mislead the public for narrow political point-scoring.

Members of the Legislature are expected to exercise oversight based on facts, governance knowledge and legislative competence. It is therefore a disgrace that elected public representatives would incorrectly attribute nationally administered projects to the provincial department while fully aware of the existing institutional arrangements governing SANRAL projects.

Constructive oversight is welcome in a constitutional democracy; however, sensationalism that undermines public confidence without context is irresponsible journalism.

Commitment to Service Delivery

Under the leadership of MEC Thulasizwe Thomo, the Department remains fully committed to accelerating infrastructure delivery, improving road conditions, strengthening governance systems, and ensuring that public resources translate into tangible benefits for the people of Mpumalanga.

The Department will continue to account transparently to the Legislature and to the citizens of Mpumalanga through factual reporting and measurable delivery outcomes

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