



# POLICY & BUDGET *Speech* 2025/26



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





**Mr Thulasizwe Thomo (MPL)**

**MEC: Public Works, Roads  
and Transport**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Madam Speaker, Honourable M Masilela**
- **Deputy Speaker, Honourable S Masango**
- **Honourable Premier, Mr Mandla Padney Ndlovu**
- **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 Malapang, as well as Members of the Committee.** Allow me to also extend my sincere appreciation to the former Chairperson of the Committee, Honourable Sidell, with whom we enjoyed a constructive and collegial working relationship. We wish her all the best in her new responsibilities as part of the Executive Council.
- **Chairperson of House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Kgoshi Mokoena and Members of the House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders**
- **Executive Mayors and Councillors present**
- **Director General – Ms. Margaret Skosana**
- **Head of the Department - Mr Charles Morake Morolo, Senior Managers and all employees of the Department**
- **Heads of Departments and Chief Executive Officers of Entities**
- **Leadership of the African National Congress led here by the Provincial Secretary Cde Muzi Chirwa and the Alliance Partners**
- **Different Political Parties**
- **SANRAL Provincial Head - Ms Mabuyi Mhlanga**
- **Representatives of Business and Labour Formations**
- **Leadership of the Taxi and Bus Industries**
- **Esteemed Guests**
- **Representatives of the Media & Ladies and Gentlemen**

## OVERVIEW

1. It is both an honour and a profound privilege to deliver the Policy and Budget Speech for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport: Vote 8 for the 2025/2026 financial year.
2. This address takes place just 11 days after we laid to rest our former Premier and Deputy President David Dabede Mabuza, a committed servant of the people. His visionary leadership laid the foundation for many infrastructure projects that are presently changing the lives of the people of Mpumalanga.
3. As the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration, we are privileged to have completed many of these projects which includes, the Mpumalanga International Food Market, Mkhondo Boarding School, New Middelburg Hospital, with others still underway, in fulfilment of the legacy he entrusted to us.
4. Honourable Speaker and Members of the House, please allow me to anchor this Policy and Budget Speech on a timeless African proverb, one that has echoed through the works of our scholars, oral traditions, African literature and the reflections of our elders. I quote: ***“No matter how long the dry season, the river always remembers its path.”***
5. This proverb is more than poetic wisdom, but it is a philosophy of resilience, memory, and direction. It reminds us that even in the face of austerities, budget constraints, project delays, and unexpected disruptions, whether caused by economic downturns, administrative inefficiencies, or climatic events, our purpose and commitment to serve the people of Mpumalanga must prevail!
6. Today, we are guided by the wise words of former President Thabo Mbeki, who reminded us that: ***“Infrastructure is not just about roads, bridges, and buildings, it is about building the future, creating access, and laying the foundation for a better life for all”***.
7. President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa further pointed that ***“infrastructure is fundamental to the development of our country. It serves as a backbone of economic growth and social progress and contributes to the improvement of the life of our people”***. Indeed, this is the essence of our work: to build infrastructure that does not only connect towns and villages, but that connects people to opportunity, dignity, and development.
8. Madam Speaker, the South African Government is under a new coalition government comprised of political parties at ideological odds. To survive and sustain this coalition, we must find a middle ground, accommodating diverse viewpoints and interests. The primary purpose should be to unite our country and create stability in government, in order to deliver on the priorities of the Medium Term Development Plan: 2024 – 2029.
9. This plan is a critical building block towards a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society. As such, the Province has aligned its policies, programmes and project with this broad plan. It is therefore incumbent upon all political parties to positively contribute towards the achievement of this endeavor. The people of Mpumalanga expect us to work together to achieve these objectives.

10. Nelson Mandela's powerful words from the Rivonia Trial highlighted his unwavering commitment to non-racialism and equality, emphasizing that he fought against both white and black domination. His statement, ***"I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination,"*** underscores his vision for a democratic and free society where all people live in harmony and equality.
11. The ANC-led government in Mpumalanga has embraced the strategic priorities that are drawn from the Government of National Unity (GNU)'s Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), namely:
  - **Drive inclusive economic growth and job creation.**
  - **Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.**
  - **Build a capable, ethical, and developmental State.**
12. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport is directly involved in achieving all these priorities. Its mandate directly impacts infrastructure development, transport systems and overall economic growth. It also manages public property and implements the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), all these contribute to the broader national development objectives.
13. In pursuit of these priorities, the Department's overall performance against planned targets improved from 67% in the 2023/24 financial year to 79% in the 2024/25 financial year. This improvement was mainly related to infrastructure delivery and job creation, which I will elaborate on further during my speech.
14. Madam Speaker, as Professor Wole Soyinka reminds us: ***"For now, let us simply observe that the assault on human dignity is one of the prime goals of the visitation of fear, a prelude to the domination of the mind and the triumph of power"***
15. His words remind us that true liberation is not only about policies or numbers, it is about restoring people's power to define their space, their needs, and their futures. In this regard, infrastructure is not merely technical delivery, it embodies the recognition and respect of our people's dignity.
16. It tells a young learner in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality: your future is within reach as we continue to connect communities through the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme.
17. It tells a person with disability: you can reach your destination as we continue to build safe roads and provide reliable transportation system.
18. It tells young women in construction: you are not forgotten, as we continue to train, equip and develop our Sakh'Abakhi Contractors.
19. It says to our people across Mpumalanga: you matter enough to receive basic infrastructure, to be connected, and to be served because here in Mpumalanga, Kubhunya Lutfuli.

## DRIVE INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

20. Honourable Speaker, inclusive growth has been and continues to be a major focus of the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration. For the next five years, government's overriding priority is to achieve more rapid and inclusive economic growth in order to create jobs, reduce poverty and build a more just and equal society. To achieve this, Mpumalanga needs to achieve between 3% and 5% economic growth per annum.
21. However, the projected economic growth rate is less than 1% per annum. To address this, mass infrastructure rollout and attracting public and private investment are crucial for stimulating growth and job creation. Turning Mpumalanga into a construction site has the ability to create a multiplier effect which can lead to broader socio-economic benefits.

### Economic Infrastructure

22. Madam Speaker, we have an ongoing responsibility to deliver critical transport infrastructure projects that contribute towards a positive impact on the lives of the people of Mpumalanga. During the 2024/2025 financial year, we completed 11 major roads projects and also undertook several roads maintenance works across the Province.
23. For example, the community of Zithabiseni, Gemsbokspruit and Tweefontein in Nkangala now has access to amenities due to the construction of paved roads in the various areas. These projects are fundamental to the success of the local economy and improving the quality of life for the people it serves.
24. Notwithstanding these achievements, the overall condition of the provincial paved road network has declined substantially due various factors, including but not limited to, ageing infrastructure, unsustainable funding models, withdrawal of coal haul funding amongst others. In this environment, it is difficult to achieve a sustainable provincial road infrastructure network.
25. It is against this background that the transfer of **1,041 km** of provincial roads to SANRAL was initiated. This process involves the handover of road maintenance and management responsibilities of some roads from the provincial government to the national agency. The transfer is part of a broader initiative to improve road conditions and development across the Province.
26. SANRAL has been a reliable partner of the people and the government of Mpumalanga for many years. With effect from this current financial year, the roads agency has embarked on a process to open offices across the country's nine provinces. This strategic decision will enhance stakeholder engagement with the various provinces and municipalities. We are looking forward towards a harmonious and fruitful working relationship with SANRAL under the provincial leadership of Ms Mabuyi Mhlanga.
27. This year, the Province is investing **two billion, three hundred and fifty million rand** in transport infrastructure projects which will significantly improve the movement of people and goods. These projects include upgrades, rehabilitations and maintenance of roads, with a particular focus on those that are critical for access, rural development, coal transportation and tourism.

28. As a Department, we are committed to completing the following ongoing road infrastructure projects during the 2025/26 financial year.
1. **Completion of road works – Reconstruction of Road D481 between Mooiplaas and Ekulindeni (Phase 3) (7.2km) – Gert Sibande (*Tourism Route*)**
  2. **Upgrading of Road D2274 from N11 to Road D1398, North of Hendrina (13.0 km) - Nkangala (*Coal Haul Route*)**
  3. **Rehabilitation of Road P33/4 between Hazyview and Sabie (7.7km) (Phase 2) - Bohlabela**
  4. **Upgrading of Middelburg Hospital access road from gravel to surfaced road (0.9 km) - Nkangala**
  5. **Rehabilitation of Road P33/4 between Hazyview and Sabie (7.7km), Phase 2 - Bohlabela (*Tourism Route*)**
  6. **Rehabilitation of Road P182/1 (R542) between Van Dyksdrift and Hendrina in ward 3 & 5 - Phase 3 (12.1 km) – Nkangala (*Coal Haul Route*)**
  7. **Construction of a Culvert on Road D935 from Limpopo boundary past Katjibane to D2740 Nokaneng – Nkangala**
29. Some of the new projects that will commence in the 2025/26 financial year includes:
1. **Rehabilitation of Road P216/1 between eMbalenhle to Secunda (6.1 km) Phase 1 - Gert Sibande**
  2. **Rehabilitation of Road D2940 from Phiva to Mdladla (9 km) – Ehlanzeni**
  3. **Rehabilitation of Road D2950 from Steenbok to D797 (13.40 km) – Ehlanzeni**
  4. **Rehabilitation of Road D2571 from R37 to P171/1 Lydenburg Bypass (6.7 km) - Phase 1 – Bohlabela**
  5. **Upgrading of Road D2915 in Zithabiseni from Bundu to R25 - Phase 2 (3 km) - Nkangala**
30. As part of our continued commitment to maintaining and extending the life of our road infrastructure, I am pleased to report that several key roads have also been earmarked for special maintenance interventions in the current financial year, across the Province in all district to ensure equitable distribution of resources. This effort forms part of our broader strategy to ensure safe, reliable, and economically enabling road networks across the Province.
31. Amongst the roads identified for this special maintenance programme are:
1. **Road D2546 - N17 to P168/1 (Lothair road)**
  2. **Road P52/3 - Bethal to Kriel**
  3. **P5/4 – Ermelo to Amsterdam**
  4. **P7/1 Volkrust to Wakkerstroom to Piet Retief (phase 1)**
  5. **P132/1 Ogies to Matla Power Station**
  6. **D25 Phola Mall to Gauteng**
  7. **D2915 v- Road P207/1 to Road D2916b (Geoderede)**
  8. **P95/1 Gauteng border to Limpopo border**
  9. **D2918 – Kwaggafontein (R573) to Entithukweni**
  10. **D3932 – Thulamahashe to Cottondale**

32. The strategic bridge projects in Driekoppies and eMalahleni, announced in 2023 SOPA, have made significant progress in planning and design. Construction of the Driekoppies Bridge is planned to commence in the third quarter (*between October and December 2025*) while a design review for eMalahleni Bridge has revealed the need for a re-alignment of the design due to the existing gas pipes beneath the construction area. The revised design is being finalised by the engineers, and the project is planned to be re-advertised in this second quarter.
33. Furthermore, the Province has intensified road maintenance activities through the launch of the Kubhunya Lutfuli Programme in support of the District Development Model (DDM). This programme seeks to augment the existing government initiatives like Operation Vala Zonke to ensure a multi-faceted approach to road maintenance. These initiatives are designed to improve service delivery by creating a more coordinated approach, leading to both efficiency and effectiveness.
34. Madam Speaker, Mpumalanga has the largest concentration of coal-fired power stations in the country, with 11 out of South Africa's 14 coal-fired power stations located within the Province. This concentration means that provincial roads are vital for the transportation of coal to Eskom hence it is a major contributor to the national economy. Therefore, preserving the coal haulage network is crucial for sustaining the country's energy supply and economic development.
35. While South Africa is transitioning towards renewable energy sources, coal remains a significant part of its energy mix. This means that thousands of trucks continue to haul coal to power plants across Mpumalanga. Reinstating the coal haulage grant will enable Mpumalanga to improve the road infrastructure supporting Eskom. The grant's return will allow the Province to reallocate funds, freeing up resources to address critical provincial road infrastructure needs.

## Social Infrastructure

36. Madam Speaker, the Mpumalanga Provincial Government continues to prioritise social infrastructure investment to address inequalities and improve citizen well-being. In the past year, a total of 141 social infrastructure projects were completed with a budget of R2.7 billion. These beautiful buildings stand not just as physical structures, but as symbols of government's commitment to improve the quality of life for citizens and foster social and economic development.
37. The Mpumalanga Parliamentary Village project has the potential to be a good investment for the Province but has experienced significant delays since inception. These delays emanate from various factors, including land disputes and community protests which results in underperformance of contractors. The Department is committed to completing this project in the current 2025/26 financial year.
38. There is no doubt that the above-mentioned project, as well as the Mpumalanga International Food Market, Mkhondo Boarding School and New Middelburg Hospital have been amongst the most difficult projects undertaken by the Department. The lessons learned from these projects have been integrated to our approach for future projects. This includes improved planning, timely social facilitation, enhanced risk management and strengthened project management.

39. Building upon previous lessons, we are more capable to facilitate social infrastructure development within the Province. Collectively, our client departments have set aside a budget of R2, 5 billion for implementation of 123 projects: Education (105), health (6), culture, sport and recreation (6) and social development (6). My colleagues (MECs) have provided more details on these projects during their policy and budget speeches.

## Infrastructure Funding

40. Madam Speaker, public infrastructure investment is crucial for economic growth and job creation. The Mpumalanga Infrastructure Master Plan (MIMP): 2060 is a key component of the Province's strategy to leverage public infrastructure investment for economic growth and job creation. The plan also plays a crucial role in facilitating blended finance projects, which combine public and private funding.
41. A useful point of reference to highlight successful collaboration between the public and private sectors, is the rehabilitation of P171/1 road between Mashishing and Roossennekal. This is a collaborative effort between the Department and the Mining Houses that consists of Northam, Dwarsrivier Mine, Glencore, RPM, Two Rivers Mine and Samancor Chrome. The Province continues to explore partnerships to accelerate implementation of public infrastructure.

## Economic Transformation and Equitable Inclusion

42. Madam Speaker, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport plays an important role in the transformational agenda. It supports localisation, cooperatives, SMMEs and industrialisation, which are vital for economic growth and job creation. Approximately R2.3 billion worth of contracts were awarded in 2024/2025 financial year of which 99,6% were awarded to black people, 41% awarded to women, 21,4% awarded to youth and 1% awarded to persons with disabilities.
43. Provincially, the Social Enterprise Development Programme (SEDP) will be revived to support local suppliers. Rooted in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) framework, the SEDP is a catalyst for reshaping supply chains, empowering local businesses and building a more resilient and representative economy. When development is localized, it can bring significant benefits to communities, including job creation, skills development and circulation of money within the area.
44. However, construction mafias pose a significant threat to Mpumalanga's economic transformation and equitable inclusion by hindering development, driving up costs, and deterring investment. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the root causes, which extend beyond the initial 30% for local companies. In response, Government is implementing a multi-pronged approach which includes law enforcement, improving project planning, enhancing communication and establishing robust social facilitation processes. We will not allow lawlessness to reign supreme!

## Job Creation

45. Honourable Speaker, South Africa's unemployment rate increased to 32.9% in the first quarter of 2025 from 31.9% in the last quarter of 2024. Mpumalanga saw a significant increase from 34.7% to 49.3% in the same period. Youth unemployment in the Province remains a serious concern, at 62.4% which is one of the highest in the country. This underscoring the urgency for inclusive economic growth and responsive job creation strategies.
46. The Departmental strategies to address unemployment amongst the youth, women and people with disabilities include increasing participation in Public Employment Programmes, increasing vocational and skills-based training and leveraging on public procurement. By focusing on groups that have historically faced marginalisation, these strategies aim to promote greater social inclusion and equality.
47. During the MTSF: 2019-2024, the EPWP programme created 177 188 work opportunities through the 30 public bodies across the Province. The main beneficiaries of this programme were women (65%), youth (45%) and persons with disabilities (1%). I am glad to announce that Mpumalanga Province is now **2<sup>nd</sup> best in the country** in terms of job creation. This is a significant improvement from 7<sup>th</sup> position that we occupied in the 2019/20 financial year.
48. In the next 5 years, Mpumalanga plans to create 191 733 work opportunities through EPWP (Women 60%, Youth 55% and Persons with Disabilities 2%). For the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, a total of 12 110 work opportunities were created against the target of 9 319 including opportunities for 7 287 women, 5 652 youth and 135 persons with disabilities. This programme remains the backbone of creating employment in the Province.
49. The Department will continue to provide training and mentorship programmes to emerging contractors so that they become future employment creators. Also, biasness will be given to programmes that specifically target youth unemployment, such as internship, learnership and artisan development. We call upon the private sector to collaborate with the government to create both formal jobs and opportunities for self-employment, particularly for young people.

## TACKLING HIGH COSTS OF LIVING AND REDUCING POVERTY

50. Madam Speaker, the apartheid system in South Africa created a lasting legacy of social segregation and distorted the placement of people from their homes and workplaces. Consequently, most households in the Province spend a large portion of their income on transport. It is against this background that government has adopted pro-poor transport policies that include subsidy schemes for commuters and learners.

## Bus Subsidies

51. The Public Transport Operations Grant (PTOG) is a crucial mechanism for ensuring the affordability and accessibility of public transport. This national conditional grant is transferred to provincial governments, which then contract with private bus companies to provide services. The main beneficiaries of this funding are commuters who rely on buses, including those seeking economic participation, geographically dispersed populations and individuals in remote areas.
52. In the 2025/26 financial year, the Public Transport Operations Grant (PTOG) has seen a 4.3% increase, rising from R775.8 million in 2024/25 to R810.6 million. This increase is intended to bolster public transport, positively impacting social inclusion and providing relief to low-income individuals. The Department views this subsidy as a crucial tool for tackling high costs of living and reducing poverty.
53. At a national level, discussion about integration of the taxi industry into the government's public transport subsidy regime are ongoing. Provincially, we are reviewing the Integrated Public Transport Plans (IPTNS) of municipalities. Furthermore, we are assessing their ability to integrate various transport modes and their adherence to the legal framework set by the National Land Transport Act (NLTA). The goal is to design a more efficient and cohesive public transport system.

## Scholar Transport

54. Madam Speaker, transport costs can be a barrier to education, especially for learners in rural or low-income areas. Therefore, the provision of scholar transport services by government helps ensure that most learners, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to education. However, we must acknowledge that the demand for scholar transport exceeds the available budget.
55. As a result of the limited resources, the Department is unable to transport all eligible learners within the Province. This limited resource allocation has led to a disruption of service that directly infringes on learners' constitutional right to education – we want to assist learners to realise this right! The Department will always endeavour to settle all the valid scholar transport invoices timeously, within 30 days.
56. This year, we have made available R518 million to facilitate the transportation of learners across the Province. More importantly, the existing scholar transport contracts are being extended by six months. The extension provides the Department with the necessary time to finalise the specifications for the new scholar transport contracts, advertisement of the tender, evaluation of bids and the selection of service providers.

57. While some challenges in scholar transport stem from broader societal issues like inadequate school infrastructure and funding. Many problems are indeed self-made due to inefficient management, lack of proper planning and inadequate oversight. To rectify this, the Department has requested the Public Protector to investigate potential financial irregularities and non-compliance with regulations, focusing on contracts, payments, and operational procedures.

## Rural Transport

58. Madam Speaker, government continues to prioritise rural transport development to improve mobility and access in rural areas. A key initiative to this regard is the Welisizwe Bridge Programme, a partnership between the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and Provincial Department of Transport. This rural infrastructure investment seeks to enhance access to essential services like schools, hospitals, and economic opportunities.
59. In Thembisile Hani, four (04) bridges have already been completed and three (03) of the five (05) bridges in Nkomazi have been completed. To expedite this programme, Mpumalanga has proposed the decentralization of the implementation of the programme to the Province to allow for concurrent works in identified municipalities. This approach will address logistical issues, strengthen the SANDF's capabilities and provide economic benefits to locals.

## Passenger Rail

60. Madam Speaker, the revitalisation of passenger rail and provision of new rail corridors is also crucial for tackling the high cost of living and reducing poverty. The Moloto Corridor is one of the rail corridors that could provide a link for approximately 60 000 commuters in Nkangala with Tshwane Metropolitan Area. Mpumalanga can also benefit from the reinstatement of the train service along the N4 Corridor to facilitate the movement of people between the Province and Gauteng.
61. Private sector involvement in the revitalisation and provision of new rail infrastructure is therefore essential. These projects will largely be determined by the private sector's appetite to partner with government (i.e. PRASA). The rail reform programme intends to re-establish rail as the backbone of transport for people and goods. This can also reduce congestion and travel time, leading to increased economic growth and spatial transformation.

## Transport Safety

62. Honourable Speaker, the Department acknowledges the crucial impact of road safety on saving lives, facilitating economies and societal well-being. Hence, it is committed to improving this through infrastructure, law enforcement and public awareness campaigns. We have a legal duty through transport regulation to ensure that there is compliance and that our roads are reasonably safe to use. Thus, the quality of our roads remains a vital element of road safety.

63. Recently, we have experienced several culvert failures as a result of ageing infrastructure and flood damages. This year, we will prioritise the replacement and upgrading of five (05) corrugated steel culverts on, i.e. P177 between Carolina and Chrissiesmeer, P5/5 between Amsterdam and Nestan Border Gate, and P7/2 between Wakkerstroom and eMkhondo, amongst others. Other critical initiatives to improve road safety includes repair of sinkholes, road signage and road markings.
64. The Transport Inspectorate Unit plays a crucial role in enforcing road safety laws through patrols and traffic checks, ensuring public transport operators comply with regulations. The unit held a total of 5 183 roadside checks during the 2024/25 financial year with 18 266 summonses issued and 18 120 un-roadworthy or non-compliant public transport vehicles impounded.
65. On several occasions, I have joined this dedicated group of officers to conduct a number of law enforcement operations across the Province. Importantly, these operations include checks on scholar transport vehicles to ensure learner safety. This has enabled me to appreciate the good work done by our officers on a daily basis and also gather data to inform strategic decisions.
66. Nationally, there is consensus that the introduction of a visible traffic policing on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week and 365-days-a-year basis will deter traffic violations and improve road safety. To date, only the Western Cape and the National Traffic Police have established a 24/7 shift system whereas full implementation across all provinces is still ongoing. Provincially, we have increased visibility especially in highly accident-prone zones.
67. The Mpumalanga Province is stepping up its road safety efforts beyond just seasonal campaigns, ensuring continuous awareness and enforcement. The Province has adopted a comprehensive road safety campaign involving various stakeholders to reduce accidents and enhance road safety. It includes collaboration between government departments, state agencies, municipalities, road users, private organisations and neighbouring countries (i.e. Swaziland and Mozambique).

## **BUILDING A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**

68. Madam Speaker, the NDP highlights the importance of a Capable State that can effectively manage the economy, implement policies, and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are distributed fairly. In pursuit of this, we have spent the past few months re-orientating and reorganising ourselves in ensuring that we build an agile organisation.
69. The Department is transforming to become the “implementing agent of choice” within the Province. A key aspect of this transformation is a shift to a regional-based service delivery model and insourcing of services such as scholar transport monitoring, grass cutting, etc. Our revised organogram is ready for DPSA’s final endorsement. The approval of this structure is a key prerequisite for the Department to effectively deliver on its evolving mandate.

70. This fundamental change in our approach indicates the Department's intention to capacitate cost centres which are at the coalface of service delivery. To achieve this, we have embarked on a programme to address the shortage of personnel as well as plant and equipment. Furthermore, specific functions which were previously outsourced will be brought in-house as part of building internal capacity. Our main goal for the next five years is to strengthen the Department so it can effectively implement its mandate.
71. To this regard, the Department appointed 440 officials of the 573 posts advertised in the 2024/2025 financial year. In the current financial year, a balance of 133 posts which could not be filled previously due to budget constraints have been advertised. These include a total of 98 road workers and other personnel in pursuit of building internal capacity.
72. To date, 3 DDGs and 1 Chief Director were appointed to stabilise leadership and management within the Department. The recruitment process of the outstanding posts is ongoing and these are planned to be filled starting from 01 August 2025. We will also invest in skills development programmes that align with our strategic goals and ensure the workforce has the necessary skills to perform effectively.

## Fleet Management

73. Honourable Speaker, the Department continues to explore alternative maintenance options, including resuscitating our mechanical workshops, among other measures. This intervention include refurbishment of workshops, appointment of additional artisans, procurement of minimum equipment and automation of process flows. The Department has conducted an assessment of the workshops and plans are in place to improve the buildings.
74. In relation to fleet management, to date the Department has filled 29 posts as part of resourcing Government Motor Transport in the districts. It has also procured 25 buses (22 seaters) since the 2023/24 financial year for our general labourers. In addition, a budget of R27 million has been set aside for the procurement of 7 graders and other machinery for the 2025/26 financial year. The availability of fleet is crucial for the State to function efficiently and cost-effectively.
75. Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) often charge premium prices for parts and services for vehicles that are out of warranty. This issue is further complicated by slow turnaround times for repairs thus impacting fleet availability. The decision to use Middelburg as a pilot workshop for improving fleet management is yielding positive results. This model will be replicated at the Government Garage in Mbombela and later rolled out in all regions in a phased manner.

## Property Management

76. Madam Speaker, building capacity of the State, also involves the optimal and efficient utilisation of provincial immovable assets throughout their lifecycle. This portfolio consists of 5 050 assets with an estimated required maintenance budget of R2.7 billion over a 5-year period. As the custodian, we are responsible for planning and managing the maintenance of these assets, but user departments are expected to budget and incorporate maintenance costs into their own plans.

77. Effective State facility management demands significant financial resources, particularly for repairs, upgrades, and utility costs, which escalate as facilities age. In cognisance to this, we will develop a Property Optimisation Strategy to address the challenges of maintaining public buildings. This approach aims to find innovative uses for existing assets and acquisition of new ones through private investment.
78. The Executive Council has since approved the disposal of State-owned houses to give Mpumalanga Provincial Government employees access to house ownership and to reduce the financial burden of maintaining these properties. The decision to dispose of the houses is part of a broader plan to dispose a total of 1,493 redundant properties, implemented in phases, with the first phase focusing on 171 homes. This disposal will benefit employees who are legal occupants.

## Skills Development

79. Honourable Speaker, there are several options to build capacity of the State and amongst them is through training and development of the workforce. Last year, 139 employees were placed on a programme for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) potentially leading to reduced study time or exemption from certain courses or modules. Also, 35 employees were trained on Supply Chain Management which is NQF level 4. These are some of the examples of our developmental focus that is aimed at building critical capabilities within the Department.
80. The Department also offers numerous opportunities to young graduates to gain valuable work experience and professional registration through its internship and candidacy programmes. A total of 273 interns were placed on the internship programme and 207 in the candidacy programme. Central to these programmes is the use of the workplace as an active learning environment and platform to implement talent management strategies.
81. Additionally, the Department has a learnership programme that enables participants to gain theoretical and practical skills in the workplace. Strategic partnerships with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) remains integral to address critical skill gaps and shortages for the economy. These partnerships are helping 240 learners gain practical skills and work experience, which in turn improves their employability and career prospects.

## Employment Equity

82. As at 31 March 2025, the Department had 2 527 employees who in various programs, regions and designations responsible for the execution of its mandate. This employee composition comprises of professionals, technical personnel and practitioners from various disciplines who collectively are the backbone of the institution. The total workforce includes 37.8% women in Senior Management Service positions, falling short of the equity target of 50%. We have done well on the representation of persons with disabilities by achieving 2.14% which was above the desired 2%.

83. Over the next five years, the Department plans to achieve 50% representation of women in senior management and 7% employment of Persons with Disabilities across all levels. Gender equality indicators are part of a larger government effort to promote equality and inclusion, encompassing women, youth and persons with disabilities. We have adopted a gender-responsive planning and budgeting approach that will assist us to address the current inequalities.

## Fraud and Corruption

84. Madam Speaker, the eradication of corruption is an important milestone in the pursuit to build an **Ethical State**. The Department is actively addressing corruption allegations, including dismissals of employees and disciplinary proceedings. A total of 3 employees were dismissed for various fraud and corruption related activities during the previous financial year. This action encourages employees and the public to come forward with reports of misconduct and also foster a culture of transparency and accountability.
85. The Department's mandate includes procuring of goods and services on behalf of other provincial departments, particularly infrastructure and accommodation. This must be done in a fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective manner as outlined in the Constitution. Introduction of the Public Procurement Act seeks to restore public trust and confidence in the procurement system.

## Digital Transformation

86. Madam Speaker, a **Developmental State** uses digital technologies to make its processes more efficient, strengthen service delivery and enhance participation by citizens in governance matters. Digital transformation is crucial for strengthening State capacity because it will ultimately lead to a more responsive and accountable government. By leveraging technology, the Department will move closer towards e-Government.
87. The Business Process Automation (BPA) project, implemented by the Provincial Treasury, is strongly linked to the automation of manual processes within the Mpumalanga Provincial Administration. The online submission of subsistence and travel allowance claims and memos will lead to faster turnaround times. Internally, the Department is implementing improvements in project management and scholar transport monitoring through ICT solutions.
88. Madam Speaker, when I began this address, I anchored it in a timeless African proverb: ***"No matter how long the dry season, the river remembers its path."***
89. Let us draw strength from this truth: rivers do not flow backward, and neither must we regress from the achievements we have made in the last financial year.
90. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport must continue to be the river that delivers the lifeblood of infrastructure to communities in need, that brings opportunity through roads that connect, jobs that uplift, and enterprise support that empowers, that restores dignity by building schools, clinics, and transport systems that meet the realities of our people; and that drives transformation by opening the opportunities for local contractors, artisans, engineers, and young professionals to shape an inclusive economy for the Province.

## THE BUDGET

91. Madam Speaker, the budget for the 2025/26 financial year is R314 million more than the 2024/25 budget, representing a 5.3% increase.
92. I now request this House to consider and approve the budget of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Vote 8, which is as follows:

<b>1. Administration</b>	<b>R368, 228, 000</b> (Three hundred and sixty eight million, two hundred and twenty eight thousand rands)
<b>2 Public Works Infrastructure</b>	<b>R 988, 197, 000</b> (Nine hundred and eighty eight million, one hundred and ninety seven thousand rands)
<b>3.. Transport Infrastructure</b>	<b>R 2, 869, 236, 000</b> (Two billion, eight hundred and sixty nine million, two hundred and thirty six thousand rands)
<b>4. Transport Operations</b>	<b>R 1, 558, 352, 000</b> (One billion, five hundred and fifty eight million, three hundred and fifty two thousand rands)
<b>5. Community Based Programme</b>	<b>R 92, 901, 000</b> (Ninety two million, nine hundred and one thousand rands)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>R 5, 876, 914, 000</b> (Five billion, eight hundred and seventy six million, nine hundred and fourteen thousand rands)

## CONCLUSION

93. Madam Speaker, the budget and plans presented today are crucial because they shape the future and reflect the public's expectations from those in power. To live up to these expectations, we must deliver and not in words, but in measurable progress. Moreover, we need to ensure that these resources are optimally utilised and that operational efficiencies are improved to achieve value for money. We dare not fail, failure is not an option.
94. As we deliver this Budget and Policy Speech, our graders continue to prepare surfaces and levelling the grounds for new developments for our projects across the Province. Our TLBs are in motion, carving trenches and opening pathways to growth. Tipper trucks are hauling the weight of delivery, ferrying the materials of progress. Mechanised patchers continue to move steadily, sealing roads. And across the Province, excavators and bulldozers are out there digging foundations and clearing obstacles for development.
95. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Premier, Mandla Ndlovu for entrusting me to lead this portfolio. It is a privilege few are given and one that comes with profound responsibility and expectations. I also wish to thank the African National Congress for this opportunity and responsibility. Lastly, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their unwavering support throughout this journey.

**iMpumalanga yonkana kuzobhunya lutfuli!**

**Ngiyabonga**

**I thank you**

## NOTES

[illegible]



## MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

### Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport

Rhino Building, No. 7 Government Boulevard  
Riverside Park, Ext 2  
Mbombela  
1200

Private Bag X 11310  
Mbombela  
1200

Tel: 013 766 6696/6979 | Fax: 013 766 8453



[dpwrt.mpg.gov.za](http://dpwrt.mpg.gov.za)



CommunicationDPWRT  
@mpg.gov.za



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*“Mpumalanga, a Province that works for all”*