

PRESENTED BY THE EASTERN CAPE MEC OF TRANSPORT SAFETY AND LIAISON | MPL WEZIWE TIKANA

**Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Hon. Helen Sauls-August,
Deputy Speaker, Hon. Mlibo Qoboshiyane,
Premier of the Eastern Cape, Hon. Oscar Mabuyane,
Chief Whip of the ANC, Hon. Magqashela,
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Transport, Hon.
Malamlela,
Chairpersons of the various Portfolio Committees,
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Executive Managers of the Provincial Administration,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good day,

It is with a great sense of honour and gratitude that I stand before you today having been afforded once again an opportunity to serve the people of the Eastern Cape.

President Cyril Ramaphosa during the State of the Nation Address called on South Africans to agree that, “within the next 10 years we will have made progress in tackling poverty, inequality and unemployment”. This Policy Speech contains the response of the department to that call which is in-line with the aspirations of our communities who have yet again put their trust on the ruling party to improve their quality of life.



We are here today to reaffirm our commitment to **Building the Eastern Cape we want**, a task which we believe requires all of us to stand together, shoulder to shoulder and continue to improve our province.

The implementation of programmes outlined below takes us closer to the realization of our goals in line with the overall Vote 10 budget which is as follows for 2019/20 financial year:

- Administration – R387 940 million
- Transport Infrastructure – R2.265 billion
- Transport Operations – R1.284 772 billion
- Transport Regulation – R388 099 million
- Community – Based Programmes – R648.081 million

Honourable Speaker, over the last five years the department has invested significant resources to address shortages in critical and scarce skills relevant to the transport sector. We continue to contribute to the skills revolution informed by a need to build our internal capacity while we ensure a pipeline of engineers, transport economists and pilots. In the past hundreds of young people benefited as follows:

- Civil and Mechanical Engineering: 80
- Transport Economics: 8
- Aviation: 11 Pilots and 8 Air Traffic Controllers
- Information Technology: 5
- Traffic Officers: 89 (external recruits) and 23 internal recruits
- Maritime Studies: 10

Our investment in people through bursaries is at R6.1 million for the current year. In addition to this, we will recruit 135 graduates to expose them to the world of work through a two year internship programme.

Last week about 30 traffic trainees graduated at the Nelson Mandela Traffic Training College. This group is the last to undergo a 1 year training programme. In January 2020 we will be sending new recruits to undergo the new 3-year training programme for traffic officers.

With this in mind, the department will also create an opportunity for traffic officers who have gone through the one year training to advance their qualification.

To further address human capital constraints, we will implement a MerSeta endorsed **Artisan Development Programme**, targeting our General Assistants and Tradesman who work under the supervision of Artisan Mechanics to improve their skills level to Artisan. This initiative will be implemented through the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Our agreement with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) will make us realise our commitment to ensure the professional development of our engineers.

We will also implement a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Ikhala TVET College for capacity development programmes for our internal staff as well as empower communities through provision of short training on labour intensive programmes such as brick paving, pothole patching, gabion basket making.

Honourable Members, women empowerment and gender mainstreaming remains high on our agenda. The un-intended consequence of the roads transfer has impacted our equity levels as representation of women at SMS level dropped to below 50%. We inherited the largely male dominated management in the transport infrastructure branch.

Moving forward, we will use our recruitment strategy to address this and target the employment of women in various strategic positions.

Within the traffic law enforcement fraternity, we are targeting to up-skill our women traffic officers, 15 have been prioritised for bursaries to study towards a National Diploma in Road Traffic Management. Others will be taken through the Women in Leadership Programme to prepare them for leadership positions in the fraternity.

Further to this, we have also taken a decision to support our women traffic officers to obtain Motorcycle Licenses a part of improving our visibility on the road.

We will implement a procurement strategy that seeks to contribute to SMME and Local Economic Development.

Improvements on our Information Communication Technology infrastructure will assist us implement austerity measures while improving efficiency and systems of internal control.

Honourable Speaker, engagements over the last couple of months revealed that roads remain amongst the top ten concerns on the minds of many community members.

We understand and fully appreciate their concerns because investment in transport infrastructure is central to the provision of services as well as for underpinning economic growth and creating jobs.

Since taking over the roads function, we took bold steps to ensure that we do not delay the maintenance and construction of transport infrastructure.

The process of repositioning the roads infrastructure branch continues and it includes strengthening our internal capacity with a bold vision of implementing a 50/50 service delivery mode. We want to ensure that external service providers complement our internal teams instead of the current scenario where they do the bulk of our work.

As part of this process, we have during the 2018/19 financial year, acquired 162 plant items worth more than R252 million.

Ladies and gentlemen, poorly maintained infrastructure increases costs and deferred maintenance makes fixing later more expensive and creates a burden on future generations.

With this in mind, we entered into three year contracts with a panel of 38 plant hire companies to speed up our response time especially for emergency maintenance. This resonated well with our Local Economic

Development goals as over 90% of these companies are from the Eastern Cape.

Honourable Members, government has in the past made several commitments to communities in response to their demands for surfaced roads. We are auditing these commitments, at this stage all indications are that we will require additional budget.

We also took a decision to develop a **Provincial Roads Master Plan** which documents how we will deal with the backlog as well as outline our approach going forward. Key to this is to prioritise strategic roads in the province.

Our stance moving forward is to construct a road from start to finish instead of the phased approach we have become accustomed to.

We reiterate our commitment to ensure that while we wait for resources to deal with this construction backlog, we ensure that our roads are safe and trafficable through extensive maintenance. During the current financial year, we are targeting to re-gravel about 732km of our provincial network.

On out-sourced construction, over the next three years we will prioritise the following strategic projects which are; 15km from Willowvale to Dwesa, 14km from N2 to Siphetu Hospital, as well as 16km from R61 St Barnabas Hospital to Hluleka Nature Reserve Road.

Further to this, our **in-house construction** team is still on course with the upgrade of various roads including 9km from Elliotdale to Madwaleni, 27km from Coffeeybay to Zithulele Hospital as well as 26km from Ngqeleni to Canzibe Hospital. On Cofimvaba to Askeaton, we are in the process of completing a 15km stretch and will soon commence our work on an additional 8km to be completed in the current year. The remaining 24km will be attended to in the next coming years.

The current economic climate compels us to consider various approaches to deliver on transport infrastructure needs. Currently, we are engaging

industry expects like the CSIR to consider the use of alternative means of construction such as paving.

We will also consult the Minister of Transport to make considerations for SANRAL to take over some of our strategic roads that are of national importance. The department is using the opportunity provided by National Treasury to submit key strategic projects like the Wild Coast Meander for consideration under Budget Facility for Infrastructure.

Another key component of this administration's infrastructure plan includes strengthening partnerships with the National Department of Defence and Military Veterans. This partnership has enabled us in the recent past to deliver three out of nine (9) bailey bridges earmarked. The completed structures are Nyosana in Port St Johns, Matatiele Bridge on T70 and Zazulwana Bridge in Butterworth. Tora Bridge in Ngcobo is under construction and work will soon start on Nkobongo, Fini and Bilatye Bridges, all in Chris Hani as well as Jozana and Sterkspruit in Joe Gqabi.

Plans are afoot to extend these working relations to include the building of pedestrian bridges in various villages.

Honourable Members, the provision of accessible and affordable transport services to our communities is critical in **Building the Eastern Cape We Want**, we therefore continue to provide subsidies to Algoa Bus Company, which operates in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, and Africa's Best 350 Ltd (AB350), to operates 136 routes in the Alfred Nzo, Amathole, Chris Hani and OR Tambo Districts.

In addition to this, we provide financial support to recognised public transport coordinating bodies, namely SANTACO at a tune of R3 million through the Eastern Cape Taxi Council and about R1.5 million to the Eastern Cape Small Bus Operators Council (ECSBOC). This funding enables the two bodies to run their operations and empower their membership.

The President in his SONA said that “we must improve the affordability, safety and integration of commuter transport for low-income households,” we will therefore in partnership with our stakeholder focus our attention on developing a more comprehensive Integrated Provincial Transport Master Plan which will ensure that all modes of transport are considered.

Madam Speaker, in the interest of improving efficiencies and ensuring that we are more effective in our work, I have recently instructed the Board of Mayibuye Transport Corporation (MTC) to investigate the possibility of integrating functions of MTC, Government Fleet Management Services and Civil Aviation under a single public transport entity for the Province. In this regard, we expect a report to be tabled by the end of 2019.

I am also happy to report that the Minister of Transport recently announced the revival of the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme under the auspices of Taxi Recapitalisation South Africa (TRSA), the body which replaces the Taxi Scrapping Agency. The Department will collaborate with TRSA and awareness campaigns will resume before the end of July 2019, where the processes, terms and conditions will be explained to the industry at grass roots level.

Madam Speaker, we are relentless in our commitment to close ranks on all factors that contribute to fatal crashes and curb fraud and corruption in the transport sector.

In line with the National Road Safety Strategy, we will strengthen the implementation of a holistic approach where Road Safety Education, Traffic Law Enforcement, Traffic Engineering and Evaluation will be the main focus to enhance road safety.

To boost law enforcement operations, we have in 2018/19 made several investments which included the acquisition of 12 high powered vehicles to increase our visibility on our roads, including R61 between Aberdeen via Mthatha, Port St Johns up to Lusikisiki; N2 from Tsitsikama via East London, Mthatha and Mt Ayliff; N6 from East London via Stutterheim, Queenstown and Aliwal North.

The introduction in November 2018 of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition [ANPR] System, fitted in two busses has improved the execution of warrants and brought services closer to our motorists as it makes it easy for them to pay their traffic fines. In the next few months, we will introduce an additional three (3) busses to broaden our reach and enhance our effectiveness during road operations.

Further to this, we are reconfiguring the **Transport Regulation Branch** to include a dedicated Public Transport Inspectorate Unit to closely monitor and improve compliance of Public Transport vehicles. We have noted incidents of fraud in issuing of operating licenses and certificates of fitness for public transport vehicles hence this move.

The strengthening of this branch will also assist to minimise tensions and curb violence among public transport operators while improving road safety. During the 2019 Transport Month, we will host an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Summit targeting all role players in the sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this administration is committed to bringing about modernized traffic law enforcement services. Over the next three years we will integrate various technologies which will not only improve efficiencies but to a greater extent improve the safety of our officers on the roads. This is a critical aspect as we move towards the implementation of 24/7 which has delayed over the last couple of years.

While we await the conclusion of engagements led by the RTMC at a National Level in line with 24/7, we will continue to engage with all role players including labour formations to explore options that will improve our visibility while reducing our expenditure on overtime.

Going forward, we will increase efforts to recognise best performance as well as sing praises of Traffic Officers who remain true to their Oath of office, benikezela inkonzo enganachaphaza iminyaka esuka kwelishumi elinesihlanu nangaphezulu.

In our gallery today, we would like to shine the light on Traffic Officer Richard Tamboer from Sarah Baartman District, Traffic Officers Fulton Slinger, Babalwa Sibuka and Oliver Smith from Joe Gqabi District (first names). They have over the years consistently applied the law when dealing with motorists and are not shy to arrest those who want to buy their way out of trouble. We are proud of your work, may your actions inspire others within your ranks.

Honourable Speaker, Mthatha Airport remains a strategic service delivery center, as such we are making steady progress to ensure full compliance with the requirements of the South African Civil Aviation Authority. We are currently at 90% and continue to implement critical elements that will allow for smooth operations at the airport.

We are also excited with the latest developments in the freight and logistics space as Transnet awarded a concession for the operation of the Amabhele to Mthatha railway to Sbhekuza Rail, a division of Sbhekuza Women Investments (Pty) Ltd. This group will commence with its freight rail pilot service on the line from **18 July 2019**.

The Department will lend its support to this operation as part of government's Back to Rail Strategy and in line with our Women Empowerment goals.

With regard to the Maritime Sector, we are engaging the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) to assist us in building the profile of the Maritime sector in the Province.

Madam Speaker, the Scholar Transport Programme implemented in collaboration with the Department of Education is now benefiting 83 000 learners transported to and from 592 schools across the province.

The current contract with our operators will expire at the end of December 2019. Plans are afoot to ensure that procurement processes and allocation of transport is completed in time for the 2020 school calendar year.

We have learnt a great deal in the last 5 years and as we prepare for the new contract we are also reviewing the Scholar Transport Policy to accommodate emerging issues. This process will include engagements with all stakeholders.

Honourable Members, job creation and empowerment remain a key components of our Community Based Programmes against the backdrop of a Stats SA report which indicate that 35% of households in the Eastern Cape depend on grants.

To counter this and ensure that we create a safety net for those who fall through the poverty cracks, we forge ahead with the implementation of phase four of the Expanded Public Works Programme. To this end, we will create fifty-two thousand, two hundred and seventy five (50275) work opportunities in the transport sector.

We will continue with our empowerment intervention programmes with the training of two-thousand five-hundred (2500) EPWP beneficiaries in technical and soft skills. 500 youths (18 – 35 years), will also receive 18 months experiential training earning a R2 300 stipend per month.

Furthermore, the programme will also promote labour intensive initiatives in three local municipalities; Sakhisizwe, King Sabata Dalindyebo and Umzimvubu Local Municipalities where we will be rehabilitating taxi ranks and drainage system and road side maintenance.

We will vigorously mainstream EPWP to other programmes of the department in a quest to create work opportunities and expand the gains of phase 4.

In conclusion, I would like to extend a word of gratitude to my EXCO Colleagues, the members of the Portfolio Committee on Transport as well as the board of directors at MTC. I would be failing in my duty if I do not appreciate the dedication of the Transport Family and stakeholders who enable us to implement our commitments to the electorate. As individuals and a collective, let us do our bit in **“Building the Eastern Cape we want”**.

Honourable Speaker, I hereby table the Policy Speech of the Department of Transport, together with the Annual Performance Plans for both the Department and Mayibuye Transport Corporation. These plans will be implemented with a budget allocation of 4.9 Billion.

I thank you