



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
TRANSPORT



Policy
SPEECH

2023/2024

Honourable Speaker: Hon. H. Sauls-August;

Deputy Speaker: Hon. M. Qoboshiyane;

Honourable Premier: Hon. O. L. Mabuyane;

My esteemed Colleagues in the Executive Council

Honourable Members;

Senior Management of the Provincial Government;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to take this opportunity to greet you all on this auspicious day, when the Department of Transport is offered another opportunity to present itself to this house to share the trajectory it will take in this 2023-2024 year. As we enter the mid-mark of the medium term, it has been imperative to reflect on our effectiveness against the mandate we carry.

While one is entrusted with the undertaking to lead this Department, it has indeed afforded me the occasion to appreciate the opportunities that are alive in the Transportation sector towards the service of the people of the Eastern Cape Province.

EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW

Honourable Members, as a country recovering from the realities of our past, **we take tune from the President's emphatic stance that there is no space** for corrupt officials in our government, and as a department are forging forward to drive a high-performance organization through the ideals of good governance. We will realize these through the measures we are putting in place to strengthen our risk management and ethical leadership practices to enable effective performance. This will allow the department to be resilient to the current climate where unethical behaviour and corruption has hit our government. As common cause, we have had challenges in



relation to this sphere, exacerbated and witnessed through the media reports and information that has reached the public domain aimed at tarnishing the reputation of the institution. Our efforts also seek to legitimize our operating environment, and ensure that we respond to the legislative mandate under which we are governed by agencies such as the Public Service Commission.

Madam Speaker, I have charged the Departmental leadership to set the tone from the top, and I am assured of this through the strengthening of the governance and assurance functions and asserting the *Tolerance Levels* of the organization accomplished in this financial year since my on-boarding.

Honourable members, the Department is institutionalizing its approved **Service Delivery Model**, and through this, has found comfort that it's operating model will meet its mandate and overall service delivery expectations. The Department has taken very deliberate steps towards enacting its *Service Delivery Model*, in order to enhance and fast-track the delivery of services and improve the lives of our people. This is evidenced in the methodology we have undertaken for planning for this coming year, where we have embraced the ideals for decentralization, in order to empower our Districts towards alignment to the *District Development Model*. The effecting of the organizational structure in the coming financial year will be another step towards achieving administrative alignment in these strategies.

We have also finalized, the preparation of the final chapters of the reviewed Eastern Cape Provincial Masterplan, which reflects on the sectoral plans for the period 2010 to 2050. The document will present to the Provincial Leadership emerging strategies to tackle the Transportation needs of the **province for the remaining term of it's scope. The Department will facilitate** the internal consultations required for institutionalizing the policy framework, and facilitate the process to have it ratified in Provincial



Management and Executive Council as part of the plans for this onsetting financial year.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The plans I will present to you today are an effort to balance out the demands from our communities and stakeholders, but are dichotomous with a myriad of challenges, particularly the constrained fiscus within which we find ourselves operating. The strength in our operating model, lies in consolidation of partner relations with Government agencies in the sector charged with the mandate and ensuring maximized investment in the province for the benefit of our people.

The Department has managed to maintain a cumulative collection rate of 88% as at the end of February 2023 against our annual target.

Honourable Members, the department of Transport is suffering great consequence due to the reduced footprint of the South African Post Office in the Province following the closure of 32 of their offices. This also affects our footprint as we depend on these sites for licensing operations. We are looking at other revenue collection modalities to avoid the reoccurrence of our current hindrances in the new financial year.

As an intervention on the challenges with SAPO, as well as enhancing revenue generation, the department is in engagements with the RTMC to embark on an agency agreement wherein they will undertake the licensing functions in areas we will collectively agree on. The department will encourage the employment of Eastern Cape based individuals in these centres in order to optimize employment of youth and people living with disabilities. It is our intention to also extent the intervention to areas where revenue collection for the province is affected by defaulting municipalities.

The Government Fleet Management Service is an integral part of the Revenue collection imperative as well. We will be engaging the Provincial



Treasury in efforts to leverage this part of revenue towards the procurement of 36 yellow fleet for Transport Maintenance operations in support of our Service Delivery Model objectives. This business case will demonstrate the Return on Investment which is intended to benefit the Department and Province from our proposed internal rental arrangements, and thus further enhance revenue collection imperatives.

The Department sustained a qualified audit opinion, primarily from the control deficiencies in the Scholar Transport Programme. The shortfalls in the funding for these services are exacerbated by these inefficiencies inherited over the years, and detected malicious and fraudulent activities which will not be left untended. The decentralization of the Scholar Transport function and implementation of the Scholar Transport System are the key strategies that the leadership of the department believes will turn this dynamic around, if not for anything but the interest of the learner beneficiaries who depend on this service to have access to their constitutional right to education. The Department has had to find strategies to respond with agility to the funding crisis in the Scholar Transport programme in aversion of provincial crises from non-payment of operators as having been witnessed in the beginning of the academic year. It is unfortunate Madam Speaker, that we enter this financial year, with another shortfall which will cripple our ability to effectively deliver our mandate for this service. Engagements with the Provincial Treasury to find common ground in this regard will be our priority to avert disruptions in the 2nd term of the academic year.

Honourable Members, in the new financial year, the department will revert back to its indicative baseline of 103 000 learners from the 125 107 learners that have been ferried since during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, to align to budget we will be ferrying 67 107 learners in this coming year and assess the financial position of the department in outer years to re-establish a new baseline. The Scholar Transport contract will also be awarded in the



coming financial year, and will coincide with the implementation of the Learner Transport System indicated earlier, which will allow for the department to address internal control and governance weaknesses in the system.

We are endemically aware that we will not be able to deliver this programme in isolation with our stakeholders and intend to bring them closer by establishing district level fora which facilitate standardisation of the service provisioning at a district and local level. Again, this will be done by leveraging on our Service Delivery Model, empowered by the District Development Model. The changes in the operating model for the scholar transport programme will coincide with the beginning of the new financial year, and from the 01st of April 2023, we will empower district management to take full delegated authority of the scholar transport programme.

EMBRACING THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

The department is prepared to successfully embrace the “New Normal”, and we are mindful that the changes brought by COVID-19 are here to stay. As we emerge from the era of a “New Normal” and reacquaint ourselves to work life as we knew it pre-Covid, we relish the gains in our investment into the Electronic Document Management System. The system has seen a marked improvement in the turnaround time on document submission for approvals, eliminating costly human errors, and addressing the risk in manipulation of documents.

This has had improved outcomes on service delivery outputs and continues to be a handy asset for the department, deriving from it, improved outputs for the benefit of the communities it serves in terms of faster administrative processes. In the 2023-2024 Financial Year, we shall continue with our radical approach on digital transformation in the full implementation of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation system, and modernise departmental Performance Management processes.



The objective of this intervention is to create a modernized automated approach to Information Management, where we will create synergized management of financial and non-financial performance information.

As earlier mentioned, the Department of Transport remains committed to turning this audit outcome around, and the digital transformation strategy is again the formidable enabler behind achieving this objective as it will be delivering the Scholar Transport Management System.

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Honourable Members, in our attempts to shift towards an improved skills profile for the Department, we enrolled some of the Senior Management to the Executive Development Programme (EDP) through the Nelson Mandela University Business School. This is an endeavour to influence the posture of Senior Management towards leading a conducive organizational culture.

The Department awarded a total of 145 bursaries for the 2022 academic year, 100 of those were invested towards upskilling internal staff while 45 went to external beneficiaries. For the current academic year, the Department is continuing with funding a total of 136 individuals, with 73 of those going to internal bursary holders and 63 to external bursary holders.

The beneficiaries are studying towards the following transport related qualifications:

- Aviation (Pilot)
- Maritime
- Civil Engineering, and
- Transport Management

In our pledges last year, we committed to be deliberate in addressing the 47% unemployment rate in the province and ensuring that we have skilled and knowledgeable personnel in critical areas.



The Department has also entered into agreements to ensure further development of its former bursary holders who completed their Civil Engineering qualification in 2022. The 26 Civil Engineering graduates have been appointed as Candidate Technicians for a period of 3 years and placed in the Transport Infrastructure Programme. The Department has furthermore brought 120 graduates (in GIS, Transport Management, Administration, etc.) into its employ through its internship programme, and they have been strategically placed throughout the organization to gain insight into the many facets and processes of our value chain.

We are also happy to report Madam Speaker, that the Department has also established an internal Centre for Technical Development through which we deliver Artisan, Operational and Professional Development Programmes. This Centre, which is partnered with the MerSETA is at its infancy, but to date has accomplished to facilitate skills development programmes for Community Based Programme beneficiaries and Departmental officials in the Mechanical and Civil professions.

Honourable Members, the department witnessed the successful graduation of 25 Traffic Officer Trainees who were trained through the Nelson Mandela Traffic College in Gqebera. This accomplishment comes amidst a time when we have high attrition in the traffic force of the department, and we will be deliberate in ensuring that we mitigate the risk of perpetuating a vacuum caused by delays in replacement of these employees since this will further limit our ability to respond adequately to this important objective of our mandate. The establishment of a Provincial Traffic College remains on the pipeline despite challenges that continue to stall progress in this area, however we are encouraged to forge ahead and not lose sight of the benefit of establishing this centre.

We intend to continue with these modalities to drive institutional development towards the professionalization of the institution.



EASTERN CAPE RAIL INITIATIVES

Madam Speaker, as part of our strategic objective to redirect freight off the roads and back to rail, the Department has secured investment into the province through the established Eastern Cape Rail Committee (ECRC) for projects that will be implemented in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, OR Tambo and Amathole District Municipalities. PRASA & TRANSNET have committed to implement a portfolio with a R10 Billion investment over 5 years commencing in 2023 to 2028 towards rail revival in the province. These initiatives are: -

- New Ngqura Manganese Export Terminal;
- Expanded Ngqura Container Terminal Transshipment Capacity;
- Expanded Rail Capacity for Automotive and Manganese;
- Gqebera and East London Automotive Export Capacity and value-added Services;
- Branch line Concessions for Revitalization and Private Operation;
- Agri-port Terminal Capacity: East London Agri-port and NCT Reefer Points;
- Ngqura Liquid Bulk Tank Farm Migration;
- Port of Port Elizabeth 100t Slipway;
- Port of East London HFO Programme;
- Port of East London Boat Building, Ship Repair and Maritime Training College;
- Port of Ngqura Waste Treatment Facility;



Through these initiatives, the provincial rail will be revitalized, inadvertently will enable the use of the following rail infrastructure: -

- Amabele Branch line to Mthatha;
- Blaney Branch line to Cookhouse;
- Addo Branch line to Kirkwood

THE EASTERN CAPE AVIATION INITIATIVES

We have in this year Honourable Members, facilitated the occupation of the Bhisho Airport by the South African National Defence Force, who will be utilizing a portion of the airport for performance of their national duties. Through this engagement, we will facilitate that the airport undergoes refurbishment over the next 3-years.

Additionally, the department is also in engagements with the government of the United Arab Emirates as an additional tenant of the airport, who will invest +-R50m to upgrade Bhisho Airport as part of a pledge by their late President, His Excellency, Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The investment will help drive the much-needed revival of the provincial economy from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Honourable Members, in 2022-2023, the Department facilitated the Feasibility assessment of the Bhisho Airport which has been submitted to the Department for consideration.

The draft feasibility report gives much hope for the socio-economic catalytic potential of this provincial key-point, which will if explored, will bring massive economic spin-offs for the Amathole Region, particularly for the Agricultural Sector.

The report recommends the exploration of the utilization of the Bhisho Airport in the short-term as an Aeronautical Hub comprising several uses



but anchored by a flight school, and long-term development of an agro-processing centre with air export requirements.

The Mthatha Airport which has managed to sustain its category 5 grading by the Civil Aviation Authority remains a priority key-point for the department and plans to improve services remain one of the priorities of the Department.

We are engaging a number of partners in order to achieve this objective. Honourable Members, negotiations are underway with Cemair as a possible additional airline and intended to foster healthy competition for the benefit of the people in the eastern side of the province who depend on the Mthatha Airport for air travel. Engagements with Vodacom are also underway for the improvement of the information and communications technologies in the airport.

The Department is also engaging the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to ensure sustained maintenance of the airport grounds and facilities as the immovable infrastructure custodian offering this transversal function.

The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency continues to be our marketing partner for the airport, and we will leverage this partnership to encourage improved demand for the Provincial Airport.

REGULATING THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Amidst our resourcing challenges, the Department continues to implement programmes geared towards sustaining our gains in the reduction of road fatalities and fatal crashes. These programmes are in line with the national road safety strategy and aligned to the national implementation plan of the International Decade of Safety.



We however as a department cannot be comfortable with any fatalities on our roads. We will continue to intensify our operations towards ensuring safety on our provincial roads by monitoring adherence to speed regulations, vehicle, and driver compliance. The department is in exploration of prospects with the South African Breweries to assist with appropriate mechanisms for the prevention of drunken driving on our provincial roads. Through this partnership, the department will establish testing facilities that will provide credible evidence for the prosecution of drunk drivers in particular on our roads.

The department has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Eastern Cape Liquor Board in a partnership that will set modalities for conducting joint programs towards education and awareness campaigns. These will facilitate the promotion of responsible drinking through engagement of Transport users, Youth in Schools and those in Higher Educational institution of learning.

Madam Speaker, the department has managed to extend the footprint of our customer facing services in the 2022-2023 financial year. We successfully opened the Bhisho Transport Service Centre which is a state-of-the-art service centre where we process renewable of vehicle licenses, payment of AARTO and provincial traffic fines, issuance of operator licenses, issuance of accident report information. In the new financial year, we will roll out the renewal of driving licences and PDPs. The centre is strategically positioned to service parts of the Amathole and Buffalo City Metro, but particularly centred to be accessible to the Public Service in the capital Bisho. Other centres that we have commissioned in the financial year include the Komani and Gqebera Registering Authorities for renewal of motor vehicle licenses.

The department of Transport has acquired the Old TBN Building through the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, as an extension of the



Transport Service Centre with the intention of consolidating the Departmental Customer Care Services and create capacity for responding speedily to all relevant enquiries, complaints, and compliments. The department will also leverage the partnership with SANRAL to prepare for **the rollout of the “Average Speed Over Distance” system (ASOD) between Fish River and Gqebera** as a pilot project anchored by this facility to process camera fines.

The Provincial Road network is suffering a beating from the increased Heavy load traffic entering the province. It is in this vain that we have committed to prioritise load controlling and will be employing intelligent transport systems for network monitoring. We will be leveraging on our relationship with the SANRAL on the capacity they are putting in place as a province in this regard. The department is in the process of reviewing the details of a memorandum of agreement that will be entered into with SANRAL to facilitate the capital investment for the Kinkelbos weighbridge to be developed into an effective traffic control centre. This investment, complemented with its resourcing from the Department will assist in alleviating the undue pressure exerted by overloaded freight vehicles on our roads especially on the western and north-western part of the province. The Department is also forging ahead in the plans to establish the multimodal centre in Middleburg that will also support the same objective.

We do not take it for granted that the department has a responsibility towards protecting and safeguarding its employees while providing amicable conditions of service. It is unfortunate that in this year, we mourned the loss of an officer on duty from the lawlessness we are fighting hard against. In this vain, we are working tirelessly to ensure that each officer is allocated the Protective Equipment required by them to perform this sterling work they give themselves to without fear of favour.



STATE OF PROVINCIAL ROADS

SANRAL as a national agency holds authority and custodianship of over **5,200 km of the province's proclaimed national road network**. Therefore, maintaining strong intergovernmental relations with the agency is imperative.

The Transport Agency has allocated over R55 900 billion infrastructure investment from 2023 to 2027 for National roads in the Eastern Cape. In the 2022-23 financial year, work covering 234 km of this network has been completed, with an investment of over R3 562 billion towards special maintenance, improvement, and resealing of portions of this network

A network spanning over 637 km with an investment value of over R 21,720 billion (39%) will go towards projects in construction allocated to OR Tambo – R9.570 billion; Alfred Nzo – R4.462 billion; Amathole – R2.124 billion; Chris Hani – R1.763b; Joe Gqabi – R1 733 billion; Sarah Baartman – R1.809 billion; BCMM – R937 million; NMBM -R418 million A budget of R8,162b will be allocate by SANRAL in the 2023-2024 financial year, with the remaining R47,7b appropriation being reserved for the outer years.

SANRAL is also currently implementing the Eastern Cape National Road Network Intelligent Transport System (ITS) Strategy. Through this strategy, the agency will facilitate the Urban and Rural Deployment of the Provincial Freeway Management Systems, prioritising the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Buffalo City Municipality and OR Tambo District Municipality; especially around Mthatha.- Construction activity that commenced early in 2023 will continue into the new financial year.

In August 2022, the Minister of Transport launched the National Pothole campaign branded Operation Valazonke led by the provinces and assisted by SANRAL. This approach will foster collaboration with the 3 spheres of government by pooling expertise and resources to fix potholes on our roads. The programme also introduces the use of technology in recording existing potholes, assign maintenance teams and track the repairs. The



Department is collaborating closely with SANRAL to leverage on this programme to achieve the imperatives for Provincial Road Maintenance, however, the aging provincial infrastructure requires far more dire intervention than this.

The state of the 42 000 km provincial proclaimed roads is cause for concern, which my Esteemed Colleagues, and the leadership of this province is implored to not turn a blind eye to. The department faces a predicament of a R3,0 billion shortfall per year to address the infrastructure maintenance backlog for annual periodic maintenance through regravelling, resealing and rehabilitation of a targeted 10% of the paved and unpaved network respectively.

These provincial roads are carrying significantly high numbers of traffic owing to the rise in vehicle ownership and the movements into new settlement areas. Over 1300 km carry significantly high traffic volumes while serving strategic functions and should be prioritized for capital upgrade in the medium to long term. Approximately 310 km from these roads are immediate candidates for upgrades.

These roads require approximately R 30.5 billion capital investment into the **Department's portfolio. At this trajectory the delivery of a safe, accessible** infrastructure in the province will remain a blurred and distant vision. In light of these challenges parallel to the scarce resources, it is pertinent that in order to achieve mileage, the department needs to strategically make selections of projects.

In the 2022-2023 financial year, the following projects were implemented and reached final completion:

Phase 2-of-4 phases of DR08046 from Willowvale to Dwesa Nature Reserve which spans 15 km in the Amathole District;



Phase 1-of-2 phases, with a total of 48km of DR08329 DR08308 DR08309 from R61 St Barnabas Hospital to the Hluleka Nature Reserve which spans 16 km in the OR Tambo District;

DR08328 from Elliotdale to Madwaleni Hospital which spans 16 km in the Chris Hani District;

Honourable members, you will attest to the inclement rainy weather over the past seasons which have been detrimental to the gains of our infrastructure portfolio of work. The Department has been allocated R320m in 2022-2023 financial year from the National Disaster fund for the relief of infrastructure damaged in the April 2022 floods. An additional R122m is pending approval for the relief of infrastructure damaged in the April 2022 floods. January and February 2023 floods is estimated R3.4b

Honourable members, the department is allocated a budget of R1,698 billion to continue with our work on transport infrastructure development and maintenance. The allocation comprises of R1.449 billion from the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant (85%) inclusive of the Welisizwe Funding, and R248,3m from the Equitable Share allocation (15%). The following projects will be undertaken under this portfolio:

26 km of DR08313 to in Nyandeni Canzibe hospital which is 30% progressed;

21 km of Part of DR08321 in KSD from Coffee Bay to Zithulele Hospital which is 50% progressed;

56 km of DR08041 in Chris Hani District Municipality from Cofimvaba to Askeaton which is 40% progressed;

14 km of MR522 in Amathole from R72 to Hamburg which is 50% progressed;



Paving of 6 km of DR08131 in Mhlontlo from Qumbu to Tsilitwa which is 45% progressed;

10km km of DR18045 in Mbashe from Centane to Qolorha which is 83% progressed;

The reseal and rehabilitation of TR04601 in Makanda from Grahamstown to Port Alfred where work will continue for 53 km which is 92% complete.

We anticipate that 30km of provincial roads will be upgraded and will achieve completion cumulatively at the end of the 2023-2024 financial year.

In our pipeline, R20m will be prioritised for completion of designs towards the upgrading from gravel to surfaced standard of provincial roads including;

Phase-3 and Phase-4 of DR08017 in Umzimvubu Municipality;

MR00700 from Stutterheim to Tsomo in Amahlathi;

the Butterworth Bypass in Mquma;

DR08047 to Mazzepa bay in Mbashe;

These projects will be prioritized for construction in the outer years, and this period will be used to lobby for funding towards this imperative.

We are suffering considerable delays on delivering projects on time due to non-adherence to contract prescripts from our service providers on projects. The consequence of this has been adverse delays in the completion of 4 projects in the 2022-2023 financial year (Reseal of the Centane to Butterworth in Mquma; N2 Siphethu Hospital Road in Umzimvubu; Reseal of the Flagstaff to Magusheni spanning Inquza Hill in OR Tambo and Mbizana in Alfred Nzo and Sterkspruit to Mlamli Hospital in Senqu). This is unfortunately a costly process, and an



inconvenience for the communities we are delivering these services to, and as implementing partners, these private contractors are encouraged to be empathetic to this plight.

The Department will commit resources towards the regravelling of 567 km of its gravel network. 25% of the PRMG will be allocated towards Valazonke Pothole Programme for the 3 959 km of provincial paved roads, and the department will undertake 29 685 km of blading of eligible roads as a routine maintenance intervention.

As part of our alignment to the District Development Model, the department will strengthen existing partnerships with Municipalities. The department will reinforce the existing relations with the following municipalities for cooperation of plant and machinery for maintenance of provincial and municipal roads: -

Amahlathi Local Municipality in Amathole;

Intsika Yethu and Sakhisizwe Local Municipality in Chris Hani;

Joe Gqabi District Municipality;

Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Municipality.

We have also used these collaborations intended towards increasing capacity towards upgrading our gravel roads, as well as a benchmarking paving project implemented in the scope of these partnerships with the following municipalities: -

Sarah Baartman District Municipality for work in Makana Local Municipality;

Enoch Mgijima and Emalahleni Local Municipality in Chris Hani

Raymond Mhlaba and Great Kei Municipality in Amathole



Ntabankulu Municipality in Alfred Nzo

Mhlontlo Local Municipality in OR Tambo;

Considering the volume of work required to recover from the provincial backlog, and the shortfalls in funding, the Department of Transport is obligated to explore other adaptive strategies to achieve an improved infrastructure network. We will dedicate the coming year to also evaluate the feasibility of entering into any other agreements and prioritise these towards this objective to minimize the risk of underachievement of our mandate.

ACTIVE CITIZENRY THROUGH COMMUNITY BASED INTERVENTIONS

The Department optimises its Community Based Programmes by encouraging labour intensive delivery of infrastructure. We have managed to complete the upgrading of the Ablution Facilities at the Jubilee Taxi Rank in Mthatha as well as the upgrading of the taxi ranks in Cala and Khowa in the Sakhisizwe Local Municipality.

The Expanded Public Works Programme remains the most impactful programme in the Department towards creating work opportunities provincially. The Department managed to exceed its annual target cumulatively in the 22-23 financial year, where more than 36 000 opportunities were created against the target of 35 017. We anticipate sustaining this accomplishment into the new financial year in order to **continue supporting the province's objective of** addressing its unemployed majority. It is noteworthy Honourable Members, that 70% of these opportunities have been awarded to women, and the department will evaluate the socio-economic impact of this achievement.

The Department has however, been experiencing challenges in attracting youth into the enrolment of our programmes. To date we have enrolled 5 929 youth, which we intend to improve in the coming financial year through



the Youth Brigade Programme. These beneficiaries will be engaged on maintenance work related to pothole repairing, guardrail installations and cleaning of road reserves to improve vegetation control alongside our roads.

We are also in partnership with the National Youth Services for training of 500 youth on different skills. These include 100 Artisans trained in Diesel Mechanics, Auto-Electrical and Welding, and 400 NYS deployed throughout the Department to gain experience in administration within the different Programmes at Head Office and Districts.

The Department is also exploring mechanisms for attracting investment from the National Youth Development Agency towards the support of the missing middle towards creating opportunities for SME development interventions. This is aimed at increasing the impact of our contractor development and enterprise development programmes for infrastructure and fleet maintenance of government fleet towards alleviating the plight of unemployment in the province.

The Department is currently in discussions with the national Department of Public Works & Infrastructure for the funding of 10 of our Artisan Learners, while MerSETA will fund 20 Artisan learners through the Office of the Premier. The Department is following an integrated approach toward this training by making use of its Centre for Technical Development in Graaff Reinet and in Struandale in Gqeberha and collaborating with its Human Resources Development Unit and Community Based Programme.

We also endeavour to engage People living with disabilities on our programmes, and in order to maximise their engagement on our projects, we are engaging the Disability Sector to assist us in locating and profiling of these beneficiaries for employment opportunities, as well as providing support towards enterprise development across the value chain of the department. Other interventions designed towards engagement of the disability sector includes provision of wheelchairs in the upcoming financial



year as part of government's initiative to address the challenges faced by this vulnerable group in transportation.

We have been able to successfully train 667 EPWP participants on Roads Maintenance, manufacturing, and installation of Gabion baskets with approaches of Storm Water Drainage. These upskilling interventions are designed towards ensuring that we streamline the achievements of creating such vast numbers of employment opportunities with the areas of scarce capacity particularly in the Transport Infrastructure Programme.

Three young people have been trained on grader operations and some of them have now been provided permanent employment in the Department.

The empowerment of Military Veterans is receiving attention through the implementation of Labour-Intensive Projects in Ntabankulu Local Municipality, Sakhisizwe Local Municipality and Raymond Mhlaba Municipality, where a total of 50 work opportunities have been created. Further upscaling projects are also being considered for the benefit of Military Veterans and their dependents.

The Department has established a research component where the impact analysis will be conducted not only for women but for the rest of vulnerable groups.

The Programme has projects that are focusing on safety of road users inclusive of School Learners through the following projects:

- Safety Patrollers and Walking Bus responsible for assisting learners when crossing the road and ensuring safety around school premises;
- Stray Animal Shut Ups, Road Rangers and Safe Animal Crossings contributing towards the interventions implemented by the department in reducing road fatalities.



The department is also establishing collaborations with the Department of Education and Community safety to expand on programmes implemented for Transport safety and other related programmes.

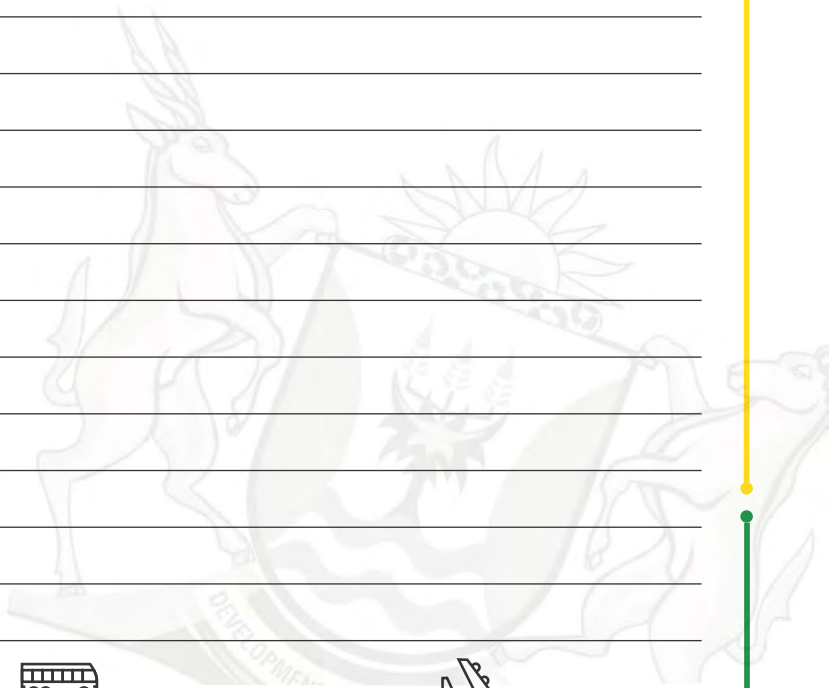
We will continue following national guidelines and policies to enable the empowerment of our communities by focusing on the designated groups i.e., women, youth, people living with disabilities and military veterans and their dependents through the implementation of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), where the beneficiaries have access to training and skills development to assist them to becoming part of the second economy.

In conclusion: As we enter this lap of the 6th Administration of this ANC led government in the Eastern Cape, and as we gear up to usher in the 7th Administration, the onus is on us to ensure that we sign off on a high note. It is the challenge that we have embraced, a challenge that we are equal to. The 2023/2024 Financial Year provides us with yet another chance to correct the wrongs that we have picked up as we reflect on the actions of this financial year. But most importantly, it grants us an opportunity to double efforts of multiplying the gains that dozens of Eastern Cape citizens have mandated this government towards improving their lives and take our province forward.

I THANK YOU.



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An efficient, safe, sustainable, affordable and accessible transport system

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