

Budget

BUDGET VOTE

2023/2024



Hon. K.D Mance

MEC: Public Works and
Infrastructure (Vote 9)

Wednesday, 3 May 2023

Mooifontein Primary School, Zastron

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**Department of Public Works and Infrastructure 2023/2024
Budget Vote 9 Speech Tabled by MEC Dibolelo Mance 03 May
2023.**

Madam Speaker

Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Legislature

Honourable Premier

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Members of the Executive Council

Executive Mayors and Mayors Present

Councillors Present

Leaders of my Party, The African National Congress

Leaders of the Opposition Parties

Traditional Leaders Present

Director General and Heads of Departments

Senior Managers and General Staff

Our Invited Business People

Our Strategic Partners

Distinguished Guests

Comrades and Friends

Setjhaba sa Free State ka kakaretso, ke ya le dumedisa.

INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker

It is with gratitude that I stand before this august house to table the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure policy budget vote for the 2023/2024 financial year. It is a great honour because we do so in the year when my organisation the African National Congress has declared this year as **“The Year of Decisive Action to Advance the People’s Interests and Renew Our Movement”**. This budget vote takes place immediately after three historic events in our country. The recent

commemoration of the late comrade Thembisile Hani, freedom day celebrations on the 27th of April and the worker's day on May 1.

May Day came to symbolize the unity of the working class. It came to be the day on which workers re-dedicated themselves to their cause for better working conditions and a greater say in society. May Day has also been used as a platform to put demands to the state, not just employers. On May Day workers came together in street processions, meetings, cultural, sport and other activities.

We celebrated this May Day in the wake of many progressive changes that have taken place in our country since the 1994 democratic breakthrough. We must be proud of the fact that we have stabilised our democracy, and have seen many resources transfers to the poor, but there is still more to be done. We are still faced with persistent unemployment, inequality, many communities ravaged by poverty and under-development.

We are in the last year of the 6th term of the democratic government. This landmark presents a historic opportunity for us to assess the progress we are making in our historic mission of building a "Better Life for All".

Madam Speaker, our work is informed by the National Development Plan (NDP) priorities, as it will be shown through the Departmental programmes which are about addressing the imbalances of the past.

The mandate of the Department is central to priority of economic development, transformation, employment, and sustainable livelihoods.

In our budget speech of last year, 2022, **Madam Speaker**, we outlined several priority areas for implementation and indeed we have progressed in this regard.

ADMINISTRATION

Madam Speaker

Section 195 of the constitution requires a high standard of professional ethics in the Public Sector. It stipulates that Public Administration must be governed by the democratic values, principles and standards for professional ethics enshrined in the Constitution. Ethical conduct and Departmental integrity are key in eradicating fraud and corruption within the Public Service.

The Honourable Premier on 28 February 2023 stated that building an effective state that is transparent and accountable will lead to a capable ethical and developmental state. He furthermore emphasised that it is our collective responsibility that we restore the integrity and credibility of our government.

Good corporate governance coupled with a developmental mind set is therefore a key factor in under-pinning the integrity and efficiency of our department. The Department of Public Service and Administration introduced lifestyle audits during 2021 as a risk management tool to detect and prevent fraud and corruption in the public service.

Honourable Speaker, the Department has complied with the life style audit imperatives introduced into the Public Service by the Department of Public Service and Administration. **Seventy nine (79)** life style reviews

were concluded in the previous financial year with no red flags identified. Where irregular expenditure and unwanted expenditure are concerned, the Department has established a committee to investigate, recommend and recover funds that were spent and value was not derived. The Department is also cooperating with the Law Enforcement agencies where cases of fraud and corruption are being investigated. **Madam Speaker**, there will be consequences for wrong doing in this Department, whether it is fraud, corruption, theft, failure to pay service providers in 30 days, lack of discipline. We must ensure that the tax payers hard earned funds are spent responsibly.

The Department will support the new fraud and corruption task team announced by the Honourable Premier on 28 February 2023. As of today the Department has ensured that **100%** of its staff from salary level 7 and above have been trained on the building blocks of integrity, compliance and ethics in an anti-corruption context through a compulsory ethics course.

Hundred and sixteen (116) unskilled workforce were also taken through the face to face ethics training. This means that **seventy nine (79%)** of our staff compliment have been exposed and received certificates for compulsory ethics in the public service. The remaining staff will undergo this intervention during 2023/2024 financial year.

Furthermore, the Department applied the ethical principles outlined in the Code of Conduct for the Public Service and the Financial Disclosure Framework provided for by the Minister for the Public Service and

Administration. The Departmental Compliance was **100%** for all categories of staff who are required to disclose their business interests.

Skills development is crucial for personal and professional growth in today's dynamic and competitive work environments. It refers to the process of acquiring new or enhancing existing skills, knowledge, and abilities that are relevant to an employee's career and personal goals whilst enhancing employability, personal and professional growth. Investment in skills development is beneficial and contributes to building a capable ethical and developmental state. The Department facilitated more than **hundred and eight (108)** different training interventions during which **seven hundred and sixty eight (768)** permanent employees were trained over a period of approximately **three thousand and seventy two (3,072)** training days.

During the budget vote of 2022/23, the Department delivered on its commitment to fill critical vacant funded posts. These critical posts that were filled included a registered mechanical engineer, construction project manager, works inspectors as well as artisan foreman in welding, carpentry, plumbing and painting were filled.

In the financial year 2023/24 appointments, the Department will further address gender representativity, youth and the people living with disability where these candidates possess adequate competencies.

The Department currently has the highest number of competent and registered professionals in the Province in the disciplines of Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Architectural Services, Construction Project Managers and Professional Technologists. This systematic internal capacity building

is now yielding positive results because a number of new clinics are being designed internally and as a result an estimated saving of **sixty four million (R64 million)** is realized for not using consultants. This saving can be directed towards other critical health infrastructure needs of the province.

In the past financial year the Department conducted a skills audit in the SCM environment and have invested **one million (R1 million)** on skills interventions during this period. Emphasis was placed on key interventions to eliminate fruitless, wasteful and irregular expenditure, contract management and detection and combatting of bid rigging to name but the few. This process will unfold further in the 2023/2024 financial year with a rotation of some employees, recruitment of suitably qualified candidates and upskilling to enhance the construction procurement portfolio thereby contributing to improve turnaround in delivery of infrastructure projects.

For the new financial year our focus will be on performing a skills audit to be undertaken on the Works Inspector cadre of the Department. Central to this is up skilling of this cadre to meet the requirements for registration as professional building inspector as outlined by the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions. Skills development initiatives will be implemented to ensure that all security supervisors and managers meet the requirements for PSIRA grade A. We will expand this intervention to the other levels of security employees from 2024/25 onwards.

PUBLIC WORKS - MAINTENANCE

Madam Speaker

The Department takes its mandate on maintenance of Public buildings very serious. We understand that maintenance work and new infrastructure projects are creators of job opportunities, and therefore the Department, through maintenance of office accommodation for both our staff and client Departments, continues to create jobs. As the custodian of the immovable assets in the province and having assumed the responsibility to provide office accommodation to all provincial departments, the department has a responsibility to ensure that buildings occupied by departments comply with Occupational Health and Safety standards. Any employer of choice is measured against the success of the employee health and safety programme. Within the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure this programme relies on close co-operation with line management that seeks to achieve a healthy and productive workforce.

Occupational Health and Safety is central to a healthy workforce, clients, customers and service providers. During the past 12 months the Department trained **one hundred and forty nine (149)** staff members on Occupational Health and Safety related training such as first aid, firefighting, scaffolding erection and further supplemented its professional capacity and appointed a professional mechanical engineer who has experience in matters relating to fire. This will assist in the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment.

The Department has a close working relationship with the Department of Labour and Employment to ensure that contravention / prohibition notices issued to departments are dealt with promptly and effectively to ensure compliance with all the aspects of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Improvement of government buildings

In 2022-23 financial year we spent **R85,749 million** on maintenance, refurbishment and upgrades of various properties under the direct responsibility of the Department. Our focus was on the repairs and services of the lifts; fire equipment; electrical equipment and day-to-day maintenance. We further refurbished a number of our buildings for use as offices by various departments.

Madam Speaker, the Department is resolute on utilising state-owned properties for office accommodation and for this reason a number of dilapidated buildings that can be refurbished to accommodate client departments have been identified. This initiative is assisting the Department to reduce payment of operating leases and to improve the status of buildings in the Province

For the past three (3) financial years the department refurbished five (5) dilapidated state owned buildings that were not in use across the Free State Province and repurposed them for office use as follows:

1. Bothaville; for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at the cost of **R510 thousand**;
2. Odendaalsrus; for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at the cost of **R1,035 million**;
3. Welkom; for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at the cost of **R649 thousands**;

4. Welkom; for the Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation at the cost of **R424 thousand**;
5. Kroonstad; for the Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation at the cost of **R2,580 million**.

The Department performs annual condition assessment of buildings that informs the maintenance plans of various departments. For 2022/23 the Department was able to exceed its target of **ten (10)** condition assessments and performed **twenty two (22)**. For 2023/24 we are planning to perform **twenty (20)** conditional assessment across the province.

Madam Speaker, the Department has allocated an amount of **Hundred and thirteen, six (R113,6 million)** to maintenance and refurbishment projects that will cover the following facilities in 2023/24 financial year:

- **Tshireletsong Building** in Bloemfontein; for the Department of Social Development to use as dormitories and office accommodation; An amount of **R 26 million** was spent on this project in the last financial year and a further **R 8,4 million** will be spent to complete this project this financial year;
- **Thusanong formerly known as Old SASSA Building** in Bloemfontein; for the Department of Cooperative Governance and

Traditional Affairs (COGTA). An amount of **R19,4 million** was spent last financial year and a further **R30,7 million** will be spent in the 2023/24 financial year.

- **Kopano Complex** building in Welkom; for the Department of Education where an amount of **R12,5 million** will be spent this financial year.

For the MTEF period (2023/24 to 2025/26) the Department intends to refurbish the following buildings:

- Unused building in Ladybrand; for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- Unutilized building in Bethulie; for the Department of Social Development ;
- Sandstone building in Ficksburg; for the Department of Social Development ;
- Theunissen for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development ;
- Botshabelo for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Department of Social Development.

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

Madam Speaker

Infrastructure development remains a key sector in the transformation of the economy and the creation of jobs in our province. Since the beginning of the current administration to date, the Department has constructed and delivered twelve (12) schools and hostels in various areas within the Free

State. Construction of these schools ensured continued creation of jobs and development of small business enterprises. One of these newly completed schools is Mooifontein where we are today. This school ~~is~~ has **twenty four (24)** new classrooms, with an administration block including reception, offices and restrooms. We have also built a kitchen, dining area, school hall and ablution facilities for staff members and school children. For safety purposes the school is safely secured with devil fork palisade all around. This school can accommodate approximately **960** learners.

The Department is continuing to implement projects that are valued at **R15 million** and more on behalf of client departments.

In 2023/24 financial year we will continue with implementation of the following education facilities that will create over **300 jobs** that were awarded in 2022/23 financial year:

- **Morena Tshohisi Primary School** in Makgolokweng, Harrismith is currently at 14% progress. We lost close to **120** working days due to community disruption. The contractor is currently on site, and we are hopeful we will implement without further disruptions.
- **Trompsburg Special School and Hostel in Trompsburg** have just started and are currently at 6% progress respectively.
- **Father Balink Primary School** in Parys is progressing well and is currently at 18% progress.
- **Oranjekrag School Hostel** in Garijepdam is progressing well and progress is at 24%.

- **Boitumelong Special School Hostel** in Thaba Nchu is running behind schedule and is at 8% progress due to the rains that negatively affected construction.

It is expected that a total of **five hundred and seventy six (R576 million)** will be spent in the implementation of the mentioned school infrastructure and **one hundred and forty four (R144 million)** that translate to 25% will be sub-contracted to small medium enterprises and local entrepreneurs.

Madam Speaker, we will complete the construction of Tshehetso School in Bothaville where progress is currently at **73%**; DR Sello in Viljoenskroon where progress is at **95%**; Breda School Hostel in Fouriesburg which is at **64%** and Leboneng School Hostel in Welkom where progress is at **94%** in this financial year.

We acknowledge that these projects suffered delays due to factors such as inclement weather, lack of water supply, community interruption, and the capacity of the contractors. We are also pleased with the progress made by the new contractor appointed for the construction of Katlego Mpumelelo School in Sasolburg after the termination of the initial contractor due to poor performance. Progress on site is currently at **85%** and the school will also be completed during the 2023/24 calendar year. We also complied with the community request to fast track and make available some of the classrooms for grade 12's in this month to create a better learning environment.

Madam Speaker, our education infrastructure projects are progressing well although there are inherent project management challenges with few

of the projects as outlined. We call on the community to work with us in ensuring that projects are completed on time and are free of community disruption.

Madam Speaker, I want to report that we have instituted legal proceedings to recover **R10,8 million** from the contractor that was appointed for the construction of Vogelfontein school in Bethlehem. This contractor was terminated due to poor performance, and we are at an advance stage of appointing a new contractor to carry on with this project.

The Department is also implementing nine infrastructure projects for the Department of Health in this financial year:

- The construction of **Thandanani** and **Rheederspark** clinics in Welkom are currently underway and have registered a progress of **52%** and **58%** respectively; and have created 51 local labour jobs;
- The contractor will be appointed in this financial year for **Dinaane Clinic** in Thaba Nchu;
- Planning for Lesedi clinic (Harrismith), Gariepdam clinic, Bophelong clinic (Kroonstad) and Vaalrock (Brandfort) are at an advanced stage and will be finalized once approval is granted by the National Department of Health.

The conditions of Boitumelo Hospital in Kroonstad are not favourable in advancing the services expected to be offered by health facilities. We have finalized the appointment of a contractor to carry out the necessary work to bring this facility to required standard. Approximately **hundred and twenty (R120 million)** will be spent on this project and the scope of work to be carried out include repairs and additions to the existing H-Block, the Kitchen, Administration Block, Mortuary and Medical Waste Block.

It is anticipated that over a period of two years, approximately **1000** work opportunities will be created from various infrastructure projects implemented by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Madam Speaker

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as the custodian of Provincially owned properties has a mandate of maintaining this property portfolio as it contributes towards the investment value and revenue potential of the Province. The register currently has a total number of 4 896 immovable assets to the value of R11, 6 billion. The asset register is used as a driver for revenue enhancement in the province. The Department has developed a Revenue Enhancement Strategy that seeks to maximise returns on the use of government properties to generate income for the province. In implementing this strategy the Department

has identified buildings that are being refurbished and leased out to partners such as SASSA, Universities and the private sector. The strategy also identified vacant land that could be disposed through long term leases; outright sale and private-public-partnerships in advancing economic development in the province.

Madam Speaker, the Department has over achieved on its target of generating revenue for 2022/23 financial year by 60%. The Department was able to collect an amount of **R75,295 million** from various sources including leases, parking and land sale arrangement with Central University of Technology.

Partnerships on Land; Unused and Dilapidated Buildings

As an infrastructure driver and the custodian of immovable assets, the Department is expected to contribute towards revenue generation in the province through leasing of state-owned properties and disposal of superfluous assets. The Department understands that to create sustainable revenue the province needs to invest in its properties as most of them have aged. The Department depends on funds allocated for maintenance to refurbish and repurpose buildings that are no longer in use or are not utilized efficiently. Given the constraint on the fiscus and in line with the implementation of our Revenue Enhancement Strategy, the Department is engaging the private sector and other government

stakeholders to join hands and participate in the generation of ideas and finding solutions for the use of these unused assets.

The Department and the University of the Free State have identified an unused building in Pelonomi Hospital for upgrade. This building will be repurposed to provide suitable ancillary services for medical students. The University has secured donor funding for this initiative and will be working with both the Department of Public Works and Health in this project. It is anticipated that the memorandum of agreement will be concluded with the university by July this year to give effect to this project.

Madam Speaker, The Department has identified facilities that could be used as student accommodation in partnership with the Central University of Technology (CUT). These buildings were utilised to accommodate nurses for the Department of Health and they include Mancofs building in Pelonomi Hospital in Bloemfontein and Kopano building previously known as the old Kopano nurses home in Welkom. Due to a lack of suitable student accommodation in Welkom, the old Kopano nurses home was prioritized as a pilot for this initiative and it will accommodate about 195 students. This facility is approximately 6 000 square metres and provides 180 single bed rooms and 5 flats that can accommodate 10 students.

A funding of **R30 million** has been secured from the Provincial Treasury to convert this building into a safe and suitable environment for learning. These funds will be used for the repairs to repurpose the building; put new lifts and air-condition, install boilers for hot water, and improve security in the student complex. It is expected that the first intake of students in this facility will be facilitated at the beginning of the 2024 academic year. There are employment business and employment benefits that will follow to Matjhabeng community during and post implementation. These includes appointment of local labour during construction, opportunities for cleaners, security guards, caterers and transportation of students to the University.

Property Portfolio Transformation

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure plays a central role of promoting transformation in the property industry which is by far dominated by Previously Advantaged individuals. The Department has paid a total amount of **R310,4 million** for office accommodation in the previous financial year on its population of **58** leases for office accommodation. Although the Department has achieved a transformation target of **63,8%** of our leased property that is owned by Previously Disadvantaged Individuals there is still a lot of work to be done. Our focus will shift to value chain and beneficiation of our youth, woman and other vulnerable groups. We are going to have engagements with our landlords

in order to direct the proceeds from our lease payments to cater for these groups. We are targeting services areas such as cleaning, security provision, maintenance, health and safety services. Our people must benefit from millions that we spend on payment of leased buildings.

Municipal Payments

Despite the fiscal constraints and the recurring shortfall on our budget for municipalities a total amount of **R488,140 million** has been paid to municipalities for Municipal Services and **R480,587 million** has been paid for Municipal Property rates till end March 2023. Of these amounts **R312,616 million** was paid to Mangaung Metro; **R154,588 million** to Centlec; **R179,053 million** to Matjhabeng and **R60,436 million** to Maluti-a- Phofung Municipality. For the 2023/24 financial year, a total of **R172,345 million** is budgeted for Municipal Services and **R480,600 million** is budgeted for rates and taxes.

The biggest beneficiaries of this budget remain Mangaung Metro at **R201,391 million**; Matjhabeng at **R146,874 million** and Maluti-a-Phofung at **R36,181 million**.

Even though the Department is experiencing financial constraints towards payment of utilities, the following interventions are in place to manage the debt owed to Municipalities:

- The Department will continue to engage Municipalities to decrease unreasonable tariffs;
- The Department continues to negotiate with Municipalities on how it plans to deal with the arrears that accumulated over the previous years;

- The Department continues to report the projected shortfall to various structures such as, Provincial Treasury, Intergovernmental Debt Steering Committee (IGDSC) etc.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Madam Speaker

The country is currently going through serious energy supply challenges which result in load shedding that continue to affect our people. The government has embarked on various bold and multiple measures to resolve this challenge. All these measures are elements of the Integrated Resource Plan of 2019 that we will continue to implement as announced by the ANC in the January 8 Statement of 2023. All interventions at our disposal, be it short term, medium term and long term will not be spared in order to immediately arrest the power challenges.

One such intervention is the reduction of electricity consumption in Government buildings.

Free State Province participates in the Integrated Resource Efficiency Programme (IREP) for Government Buildings which is led by the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The programme is aimed at introducing mechanisms to reduce consumption of electricity and water in government buildings. One of the key deliverables of this programme is to facilitate private sector partnerships to install Solar PV and other energy efficiency initiatives in hospitals, clinics and other facilities.

The province will continue with the installation of Solar PV panels in the identified government building where the risk of theft is low. This year we have prioritized the following buildings

- Public Works and Infrastructure offices in Hamilton, Bloemfontein
- Kopano Complex in Welkom
- Public Works offices in Qwaqwa and Kroonstad.

Security Services

The Department is concerned about the increasing incidents of theft and vandalism of public infrastructure. During the 2022/23 a number of theft and vandalism cases were reported in our health institutions, schools, traffic centres and offices. In some instances it has been established that government officials are involved and necessary disciplinary processes are timeously undertaken for those involved. We have improved security measures at the Free State House, OR Tambo and Fidel Castro buildings by installing CCTV Cameras; boom gates; scanners and turnstiles at the entrances.

The department will be prioritizing Kopano Complex in Welkom and MPL Village for security upgrades in 2023/24 financial year. We will be working with the Department of Health and the Free State Legislature to improve security measures at their facilities.

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

Madam Speaker

The objective of EPWP Phase IV is to provide work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through labour-intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing towards elimination of poverty, reduction of inequality and creation of employment. The Department prioritises the inclusion of youth, women and people with disabilities while responding to EPWP's call of income relief to the impoverished communities.

Various interventions are budgeted for by the Department to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment. These include; **Cash for Waste, Community Work Programme, Cleaning & Greening, National Youth Service Programme and Skills Training Programme.**

The Department prides itself in leading by example while coordinating the EPWP across all spheres. During the 2022/23 financial year, the Department was able to create **2 696** work opportunities against the target of **2 600** by end of quarter 4.

Out of those work opportunities achieved by the Department, vulnerable groups benefited as follows;

- **Women - 1 512** that translates into **56%**
- **Youth - 1 145** that translates into **42%**
- **and People with Disability – 36** that translates to **1.34%**

The Department spent a total of **R37,649 million** in these EPWP programmes in the previous financial year.

Furthermore, the Department successfully coordinated the creation of **51 081** work opportunities against a target of **50 000** for all three

spheres of government which includes Local, Provincial....And again **Madam Speaker**, the vulnerable categories benefitted as follows;

- **Women- 37 038** that translates into **73%**
- **Youth - 18 240** that translates into **36%**
- **and People with Disability - 405** that translates into **0.79%**

Our Plans for 2023/24 financial year are as follows;

The Department has committed a budget of **R37, 8 million** for implementation of Public Employment Initiatives which will support communities on the ground to accelerate job creation for the unemployed, particularly youth and women. We commit to create 2 000 work opportunities for the 2023/24 financial year. We are on course in recruiting 1 511 participants to add to the 489 participants that are carried over from the previous financial year in the following poverty alleviation programmes;

National Youth Service Programme

NYS is a special Presidential Programme aimed at addressing the high levels of youth unemployment. There are currently 291 young people that are already participating in this programme. We are going to augment this number by recruiting a further 190 young people in Jagersfontein, Smithfield, Rouxville, Luckhoff, Faurismith and Edenburg. The Department will recruit a further 85 young people that will be placed in horticulture, landscaping, window cleaning, painting and pest control programme.

Skills Training Programme

In furthering efforts of empowering unemployed youth and providing sustainable opportunities through EPWP, the department will explore forging partnerships with all relevant SETAs in particular Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) and Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Service SETA (merSETA). The objective of this collaboration is to expand over and above departmental available resources in skilling our youth on relevant fields which these SETAs provide as well as facilitating access to work opportunities in the job market. To this effect **Madam Speaker**, the Department will target a minimum 500 unemployed youth across the province to access such opportunities.

Another area of expansion to the mandate of EPWP is ensuring all those unemployed people who participated in the programme are exposed to exit opportunities beyond EPWP participation. The Department intends to intensify its Enterprise Development component in partnership with external stakeholders. This will help EPWP participants find opportunities beyond temporary employment such as entrepreneurship, cooperatives as well as establishment of community based developmental programmes. Majority of those currently engaged in departmental EPWP programmes in the current financial year will be provided with this opportunity to ensure readiness beyond EPWP employ.

The Department will draw from experience of past successful EPWP collaborations such as Centlec in 2018 where electrical artisans were trained and placed for employment as well as a partnership with Sasol firm in 2021 where 70 young people were trained in environmental practices for the benefit of Ngwathe local municipality.

Community Works, Cash for Waste and Cleaning and Greening Programmes

Community works programme is a government initiative aimed at tackling unemployment by creating work opportunities in areas such as cleaning of streets, storm water, taxi ranks and other public areas. This programme is complemented by cleaning and greening programme that focuses more on the environment and culture that is designed to assist local municipalities in beautifying green parks and cleaning cemeteries whereas cash for waste programme involves collection of waste and elimination of illegal dumping sites in our areas of settlement. Our plans for 2023/24 financial year is to recruit 210 participants that will spread across the province districts. in Mangaung, 220 in Fezile Dabi, 260 in Lejweleputswa, 225 in Thabo Mofutsanyana and 285 in Xhariep District that includes the town of Zastron.

The Department will continue to play a critical role in ensuring EPWP implementation by all the Provincial Departments; Municipalities. The Free State Province has again committed to creating 50 000 work opportunities of which 60% of those will be benefitting women, 55% towards youth and 2% for people with disabilities.

The Department will continue to be the champion of EPWP policy implementation through strategic engagements with political heads of all role-players in EPWP within the province.

It will be expected that both Municipalities and Departments implement programmes that will yield job creation towards EPWP targets as informed by signed protocol agreements. We pledge commitments from all the stakeholders to lead job creation efforts as it is public knowledge that the status of unemployment in our province is high.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker

We promise to work tirelessly and with full cooperation with our sister Departments and other stakeholders to ensure the full realisation of our mandate with the available limited resources, in time and with the required standard. The strategic direction and Departmental programmes we have described today constitute our plan for creating real improvement in the conditions of our people's lives in the province.

Madam Speaker, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Premier for affording me the opportunity to lead the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in this last year of the current sixth term of Government. To my colleagues in the Executive Council, thank you for your invaluable advice and counsel.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Head of Department; Mr Ernest Mohlahlo, Senior Management and the entire workforce of the Department for the support they have shown since I joined the Department.

Let me take the opportunity to acknowledge my husband, Dr. Kennedy Mahlatsi and my children Khumo, Oreabetse and Kgauhelo. Special gratitude goes to you my family for the unwavering support and for allowing me to serve the people of our country at this level.

Madam Speaker, I now table the budget for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, and accordingly request the house to approve an amount of **R1.751 billion** for the 2023/24 financial year, which is allocated per programme as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration **(R 154.723 million)**
- Programme 2: Public Works and Infrastructure **(R1.537 billion)**
- Programme 3: Expanded Public Works Programme **(R59.499 million)**

I THANK YOU

KE YA LEBOHA.

BUDGET VOTE: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
BUDGET ALLOCATION PER PROGRAMME	2023/24 (R'000)
ADMINISTRATION	154 723
PUBLIC WORKS INFRASTRUCTURE	1 537 095
EPWP	59 499
Grand Total	1 751 317

BUDGET ALLOCATION PER ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION	2023/24 (R'000)
Compensation of Employees	488 772
Goods and Services	670 006
Transfer Payments	485 642
Payment for Capital Assets	106 897
Grand Total	1 751 317