the dr&pw

Department:
Roads and Public Works
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BUDGET VOTE 2026/27

BUDGET VOTE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC ROADS AND PUBLIC WORKS, MS. BFP MAKATONG (MPL), TO THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

07 July 2026

Honourable Speaker, Newrene Klaaste,
Honourable Deputy Speaker, Sharifa Ferris,
Honourable Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul,
Traditional Leaders present,
Honourable Members of the Provincial Executive Council,
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Executive Mayors, Municipal Mayors and Councillors,
The Director-General,
Heads of Departments,
Members of the Media,
Viewers watching from our social media platforms,
Listeners of various radio stations
Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Honourable Speaker, we table this budget at the heart of Kimberley's oldest township, Galeshewe. This is a township with profound political history, associated with the great Kgosi Galeshewe, whose lineage connects to the ancient Makgosi of Kuruman in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District, the district where this MEC was born and bred.

A few weeks ago, Premier Dr. Zamani Saul and we launched a multimillion rand pothole patching project, Vala Zonke, here in Kimberley and Galeshewe. Vala Zonke is a national programme launched by the current Secretary General of the ANC, Comrade Fikile Mbalula, during his tenure as Minister of Transport. The project, a collaboration between the Department of Roads and Public Works and Sol Plaatje Municipality under our Root Out the Dust programme, was preceded by the unveiling of the Yellow Fleet, an initiative that will see Frances Baard District Municipality and Sol Plaatje local municipality roads maintained in real time. We will provide more details later in the speech.

Honourable Speaker, we table this budget at a moment when South Africa's infrastructure and construction sector is being called to account by its own professional leadership. In a recent opinion piece by **Dr Ndoyisile Theys, Acting Chief Operations Officer of the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions,** described our construction sector as bleeding. His words were precise and damning that the built environment, accounting for **three to four percent of national GDP and employing 1.4 million people, is a sector under severe strain.** According to Dr Theys, **nine out of ten large construction projects in this country finish over budget, over time, or both.**

We, in the Northern Cape do not need national statistics to understand this reality because we live it. The case in point is the Kalahari Intermediate and

Bankhara Bodulong Primary School, and a number of capital projects across other districts that have not been completed on record time. The Mamathwane Road between Kathu and Hotazel has had its first contractor set aside by the High Court and its second terminated for non-performance, a road carrying the manganese that powers our provincial economy, now being restarted from scratch.

Dr Theys further noted that a skills gap in engineering and technical professions that stood at **14% in 2018 had reached 38% by 2025**. He further highlighted that extortion and violent disruption of construction sites as among the least researched yet most dangerous threats facing the sector today, falling hardest on small contractors and municipal projects.

In a Province of **372,889 square kilometres** with a thin professional base, this shortage is existential. It is precisely why the Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme is not a nice-to-have. It is an act of institutional survival. And it is why the construction mafia, which has already disrupted the Galeshewe Library site and held community development hostage, will find zero tolerance from this administration.

Honourable Speaker, a few days ago we had the privilege of participating in the **2nd Public Works and Infrastructure Summit** convened by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure under the theme "*From Collapse to Confidence: Strengthening Public Safety, Asset Management and Infrastructure Delivery*." The summit culminated in the signing of the **National Built Environment and Construction Safety Commitment Pledge**, a national call for all spheres of government, the construction industry, and built environment professionals to restore public confidence through safe infrastructure, ethical governance, accountability, and accelerated service delivery.

This national commitment resonates profoundly with the work we are undertaking in the Northern Cape. It affirms that infrastructure is about restoring dignity, stimulating economic growth, creating employment, and strengthening the social fabric of our communities. As Dr. Theys rightly argues, infrastructure should not be viewed as an expenditure item but as a strategic investment that unlocks inclusive economic development. Roads connect farmers to markets, learners to schools, patients to healthcare facilities, and investors to opportunities. Every bridge built, every road rehabilitated, and every public facility maintained is an investment in the future prosperity of our Province.

Madam Speaker, guided by this national vision and the Provincial Government mantra "***Modern, Growing and Successful Northern Cape***", the Provincial Department of Roads and Public Works remains steadfast in its commitment to build infrastructure that is safer, more resilient, economically transformative, and responsive to the needs of our people. We are advancing our remodelling agenda and have put the following in place:

We have **transferred the yellow fleet into direct departmental control**. We have **adopted a zero-tolerance posture toward site disruption**, invoking the Intimidation Act and the Prevention of Organised Crime Act where necessary, because public infrastructure belongs to the people of the Northern Cape and not to those who seek to hold it hostage. Our commitment to **paying every valid invoice within 30 days is gaining momentum,** because small contractors cannot subsidize government's slow administration. And through the **Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme, we are building the artisan pipeline this province needs** for the decade ahead.

The 2026/27 budget we table today is our second under the **2025 to 2030 Strategic Plan, aligned to the three pillars of the Medium-Term Development Plan**, namely; inclusive economic growth, reducing the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND FISCAL OUTLOOK.

Honourable Speaker, an infrastructure budget does not exist in a vacuum. It exists in a Province, among people, within an economy, and the state of that economy determines the weight this budget must carry.

The Northern Cape is a province built for infrastructure-led growth. We hold over 77% of the world's on-land manganese resources. We are home to the Namakwa Special Economic Zone, targeting growth from R164 billion to R200 billion in GDP and 60,000 new jobs by 2030. But none of that potential moves without infrastructure. Manganese does not export itself because every tonne of ore, every megawatt of energy, every crate of fruit travels, at some point, on a road this department maintains.

South Africa's mining sector grew **4.6% year-on-year in early 2026**, with manganese among the key contributors. The journey of Northern Cape manganese to the world begins on the R31, running through the heart of the John Taolo Gaetsewe District past the mines of Hotazel and Black Rock, through Kuruman and Kathu, connecting to national routes carrying ore southward through Kimberley, westward through Upington along the N14 toward Springbok and Port Nolloth, and eastward through De Aar and Noupoort toward the port of Gqeberha. A journey of approximately 1,000 kilometres from mine to sea. Every kilometre of that journey travels on roads this department is responsible for.

We deliver this mandate under compounding pressure. The recent floods left no District untouched. The ZF Mgcawu, Frances Baard, and John Taolo Gaetsewe were formally declared disaster areas. Roads were destroyed. Bridges collapsed. Communities were cut off. What took years to build was undone in days. We are not starting from a baseline. We are starting from a deficit.

Construction inflation in 2026 is projected at 5.9%, meaning the same budget buys less road and less building than it did a year ago. Steel prices have increased, directly affecting bridge and rehabilitation costs. Cement costs fluctuate with energy prices. Fuel increases push up the cost of every grader, tipper truck, and water tanker we deploy. Materials account for approximately 50% of any construction budget, and when those costs rise faster than our allocation, the gap between what we are given and what we can build widens silently, while communities wait.

It is within this reality that we table a budget of **R2.347 billion.** Every rand must work harder than last year. And yet the roads must be maintained, the buildings must be upgraded, and the work opportunities must be created. That is the mandate. And we will deliver it.

REMODELLING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS AND PUBLIC WORKS.

Honourable Speaker, the remodelling of this department is not a cosmetic exercise. It is a fundamental transformation of how we are structured, capacitated, and how we deliver.

We are conducting a comprehensive institutional review targeting a concurred and approved organisational structure by 31 March 2027. The review follows a diagnostic analytical approach that will decentralise critical positions to district level, where service delivery actually happens, while maintaining a lean strategic Head Office. Consultations are ongoing with organised Labour, the Office of the Premier, Provincial Treasury, and the Department of Public Service and Administration. This restructuring is a direct response to our current vacancy rate of 54.17%, which increased following the voluntary early retirement of 20 officials in March 2026.

On technical capacity, we have registered 18 technically qualified personnel on a CETA-funded structured candidacy programme toward professional registration as Engineers, Project Managers, Quantity Surveyors, and Architects. A department with professionally registered built environment practitioners does not need to outsource what it can do itself.
With effect from 1 April 2026, the white fleet function moved to NCEDA and the yellow fleet is now fully under departmental operations. We are training 20 internal artisanal staff and 100 youth through a MerSETA-funded Tyre

Repair and Maintenance Learnership Programme, commenced December 2025, concluding November 2026.

We are building a department that is leaner at the top, stronger at district level, and capable of delivering with its own hands.

PUBLIC WORKS

PUBLIC WORKS INFRASTRUCTURE (PROGRAMME 2).

Honourable Speaker, Programme 2 is responsible for managing the province's immovable asset portfolio and delivering building infrastructure for client departments. But equally important is the quality of our relationship with all 31 municipalities across the Northern Cape that depend on us as a partner, a landlord, a funder, and an intergovernmental ally.

In the 2025/26 financial year, we conducted a comprehensive series of municipal engagements across all five districts, meeting mayors, municipal managers, and Chief Financial Officers to address five critical areas: **property disposal and utilization, rates and taxes management, land expropriation, the Expanded Public Works Programme, and road encroachment.** These were not courtesy visits. They were structured, substantive engagements that produced agreed frameworks and clear commitments on both sides. What follows is an accountability report to this House on what those engagements produced and what we will deliver as a result.

Property disposal.

Honourable Speaker, our municipal engagements confirmed what we have long believed, that government-owned properties must not be treated as disposable commodities. They must be deployed strategically as catalysts for economic development, community empowerment, and spatial transformation.

Our disposal policy prioritizes transfer over outright sale, preserving the long-term developmental value of these assets while unlocking their potential for job creation and community benefit. Priority is given to previously disadvantaged individuals, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural communities. All asset transfer requests must be supported by Council Resolutions that demonstrate clear developmental objectives, ensuring transparency and alignment with municipal development strategies.

The province currently holds **13,443 hectares of vacant land and 33 vandalized buildings**. These are not liabilities, they are opportunities, only if in good condition are placed in right hands.

The **Renovate, Operate and Transfer model** enables the private sector to restore derelict buildings without state capital input, addressing vandalism and unlawful occupation while leveraging private resources for public benefit. We are in the process of finalizing terms of reference for expressions of interest from the public on these vacant buildings before the end of this financial year.

Rates and taxes.

Honourable Speaker, the management of property rates and taxes remains one of the most persistent and complex fiscal challenges in the relationship between this department and our municipal partners.

As a Department, we bear direct responsibility for servicing rates and taxes accounts for all provincial government properties across all 31 municipalities. These includes schools, hospitals, administrative buildings, and public facilities. The liability has historically accumulated because the budget allocated has never matched the obligation.

The Province has made a deliberate decision to elevate rates and taxes to a policy issue, recognizing that this responsibility cannot be treated solely as a Roads and Public Works matter. It is a Provincial obligation requiring collective attention and coordinated action across all Departments, SALGA, and municipalities, addressed strategically and sustainably rather than being confined to the custodial responsibilities of this Department alone.

For **2025/26,** the Department projected a shortfall, **with R111 million budgeted against a need of R135 million.** Despite stringent budgetary constraints, we have made meaningful progress, reducing arrears owed to municipalities from **R700 million to just under R400 million.**

We recently concluded a **landmark agreement with Sol Plaatje Municipality, where R95 million** was paid against the outstanding debt, with the remainder written off as agreed. The Sol Plaatje debt has been reduced significantly from over **R600 million to just below R300 million**. The remaining balance largely consists of disputed accounts, currently being addressed jointly by the department and the municipality.

Clear protocols have been established with municipalities across all five Districts for addressing future billing discrepancies, emphasizing early intervention before disputes escalate into crises. We continue to engage Provincial Treasury to provide adequate, dedicated, and ring-fenced budget for property rates and taxes to prevent this liability from rebuilding itself year after year.

Condition assessments.

Honourable Speaker, the responsibility to conduct condition assessments on provincial immovable assets rests with this Department. It remains, however, an unfunded mandate.

In terms of the **Government Immovable Asset Management Act**, condition assessments must be conducted at least once every five years. The last budget allocation received from Provincial Treasury for this purpose was in the 2013/14 financial year. The department's inability to fully discharge this obligation has resulted in repeat audit findings.

To mitigate this risk, the Department has been scraping within its limited equitable share to initiate the process, while continuing to make presentations to Provincial Treasury for dedicated funding. **Condition assessments are not an administrative requirement for their own sake. They are the foundation upon which user Departments plan maintenance and replacement decisions, manage asset lifecycles sustainably, and ensure that service delivery is not compromised by the deterioration of the buildings that enable it.**

We call on Provincial Treasury to fund this mandate. The cost of not doing so is measured in audit findings which has a negative impact in the Department and it mandate.

Land expropriation.

Honourable Speaker, when President Ramaphosa signed the Expropriation Act into law, many minds went to farms and title deeds. Our mind went to Skeyfontein.

Skeyfontein is a small community in Tsantsabane, in the ZF Mgcawu District. Not a community that made headlines. Not a community whose struggles trended on social media. But a community whose daily reality captures, more precisely than any policy document could, exactly why the **Expropriation Act** matters for infrastructure and for human dignity.

The people of Skeyfontein received their land through the land restitution process, a constitutional promise fulfilled, a piece of South Africa returned to those from whom it was taken. But that land is surrounded on all sides by private farms. To reach Postmasburg, the nearest economic hub, the community must seek permission from neighbouring private landowners to open and close gates as they pass through private property. Every trip they intend to take. Every emergency that needs urgent attention. Every school morning drop-off. This community, Honourable Speaker, must ask permission to move.

The Expropriation Act changes this as it gives the Minister clear authority to expropriate land for public interest purposes, and there is no more compelling public interest than connecting a restituted community to the world around it.

We intend to use the **Expropriation Act 13 of 2024** to pursue the land necessary for a proper access road connecting Skeyfontein to

Postmasburg. To give effect to this, the department will initiate the proclamation of the access road, ensuring it is formally Gazetted as a public road and permanently protected under provincial jurisdiction.
We have positioned the Department as a key partner in supporting municipalities to identify and acquire land for public interest purposes across all five districts, providing technical expertise in land identification, valuation, and the legal procedures required for successful expropriation.
Skeyfontein will not wait forever; and with this Act, they will not have to.

Road encroachment.

Honourable Speaker, the recent floods did not only damage roads and bridges. They exposed something we must speak to directly, because lives and infrastructure depend on it.

In Heiso Village in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District, floodwaters surrounded residential homes and trapped families inside. Community members dug a passage through a provincial road to drain the water and save their homes. We condemn what has been done by the residents of Heiso.

This is precisely because the homes were built on Provincial road servitude, a designated corridor surveyed, planned, and reserved precisely because it was not suitable for permanent human settlement. Road servitudes are not random lines on a map. They are engineering and safety boundaries that determine where roads can be built, widened, drained, and maintained. What happened in Heiso is not a roads problem, however, it is a land use management problem.

Land use management is the first line of defense against infrastructure failure. Before a single brick is laid, before a single family is settled, the question must be asked that what is this land designated for? Is it a road servitude? A flood plain? A drainage corridor?

These are questions of human safety, and the consequences of not asking them are measured in families trapped by rising water, roads dug open by desperate hands, and infrastructure destroyed that took years and millions of rands to build.

We therefore make a direct appeal to the **Makgos**i of our Province. Because Makgosi are the custodians of land allocation in their communities, and they hold enormous power and enormous responsibility. We appeal to every Kgosi across the Northern Cape, that before allocating any piece of land to any community member, first establish together with the relevant municipality whether that land falls within a road servitude.
One conversation before allocation can prevent a flood disaster, protect a family's home, and preserve the infrastructure corridor that the entire community depends on.

We commit our Department to making this easier by developing accessible, district-level road servitude maps that **Makgosi and Traditional Councils** can consult before any land allocation is made. We will engage the House of Traditional Leaders to formalize this as a standard step in customary land allocation processes, and we will continue to call on municipalities to strengthen building control enforcement.

The Parliamentary village.

Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Village Project is formally registered with National Treasury as a Public-Private Partnership under Registration Number TASP 183. A Transaction Advisor has been appointed and has completed a draft feasibility study, presented to the project team on 25 June 2026. The study covers needs analysis, options analysis, project due diligence, value assessment, economic valuation, and procurement plan. A final consolidated report will be presented to EXCO at its next sitting.

PROJECT DELIVERY.

Department of Health.

Honourable Speaker, delivery is measured in buildings completed and communities served. Recent completions include the upgrading of **Voorspoed Primary School**; installation of two megalitre backup water tanks and HVAC systems at **Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital; refurbishment of the Dr Arthur Letele Medical Depot to SAHPRA and SANS standards**, with works completion in February 2026; **the new Schmidtsdrift Clinic** serving a community that previously lacked an Ideal Clinic standard facility, with practical completion on 28 April 2026; and the critical **electrical infrastructure replacement at Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital,** involving four LV boards, seven transformers, one mini-substation, four ring main units, and eleven MV switchgears, with practical completion on 1 June 2026. This project required meticulous sequencing around the hospital's 24-hour operational demands to protect patient safety in life support systems, surgical theatres, and emergency wards.

The Tshwaragano Hospital upgrade in Kuruman, including a new Gateway Clinic, associated walkways, and asbestos removal, is at 82% construction progress.

Department of Education.

Currently under construction are **11 projects on behalf of the Department of Education, ranging from new full-service schools and ECD centres** to ablution facilities, nutrition centres, science laboratories, and multipurpose courts. A new English Medium Secondary School in Kimberley is in the planning and design phase, aimed at alleviating school congestion in the city.

Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

On behalf of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture; the **Masiza School repurposing into DSAC district offices is at 90% progress;** the **Mayibuye Multi-Purpose Centre refurbishment in Galeshewe is at 40%; and the new Galeshewe Library stands at 10% progress due to repeated disruptions by a small group of non-compliant individuals**. This library was built for the community of Galeshewe. It must be allowed to be completed.

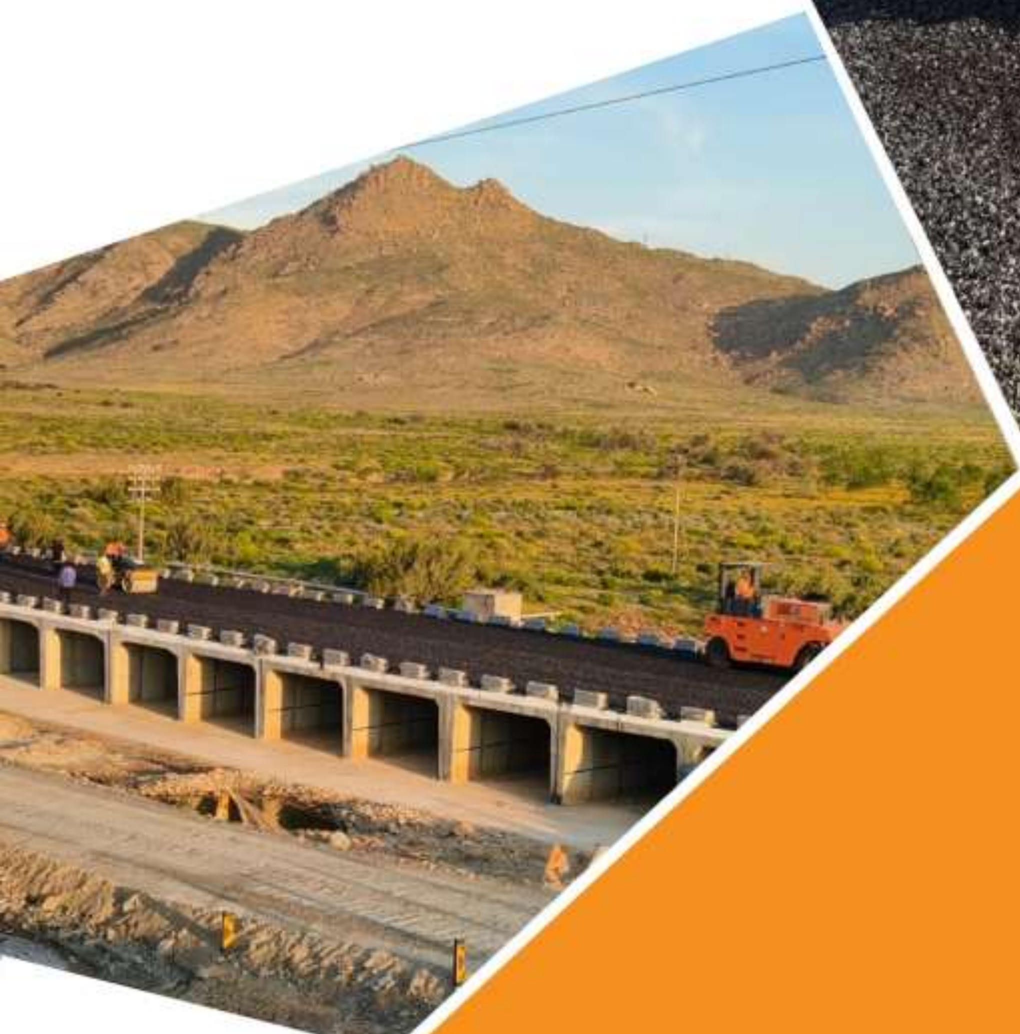
Department of Social Development.

Construction of new offices for the Department of Social Development is progressing through the planning phase.

Custodian of provincial asset register.

As custodian of the Provincial Immovable Assets Register, the Department is responsible for maintaining its accuracy, completeness, and reliability. **Section 42 PFMA** transfers by all implementing agents must comply with GIAMA custodial principles and withstand audit scrutiny. Incomplete documentation, encumbered properties, unverified valuations, and unresolved zoning or legal status are non-negotiable items that will compromise the integrity of the register. Where any of these elements pose an audit risk, the Department is bound by legislation not to accept such transfers.

ROADS



TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (PROGRAMME 3)

Honourable Speaker, the Northern Cape has a total **road network of 26,542.38 kilometres: 2,991.26 kilometres of paved roads, 52.65 kilometres of segmented block roads, and 23,498.47 kilometres of unpaved gravel roads.** This network is the circulatory system of our Province, connecting mines to ports, farms to markets, villages to hospitals, and children to schools. When it fails, everything fails.

The Visual Condition Index of our flexible paved network stands at **65%, a fair condition, improved from 63%** in the previous financial year. This modest but meaningful improvement is the direct result of targeted investment in pothole repair, preventative maintenance, and **the systematic deployment of our Vala Zonke programme**. However, **16.74% of our paved network remains in poor condition and 1.58**% in very poor condition. These roads demand urgent and sustained attention.
The MTEF Provincial budget for the next decade is estimated at **R4.42 billion against a technical need of R26.386 billion, a shortfall of R21.966 billion.** Our strategic priority is therefore to protect the paved network while arresting further decline on our unpaved roads through chemical stabilization, stabilized calcrete, crushing technologies, and the innovative use of mine waste material as a cost-effective stabilizing agent.

Flood damage and climate change.

Honourable Speaker, the Northern Cape is not immune to the global climate crisis. We are on its front line. The Department have been living its consequences in damage reports, emergency callouts, communities cut off from the world, and a road network being asked to absorb punishment it was never designed to withstand.

It began in 2023 in the Namakwa District, flooding of a scale and severity that had no precedent in the memory of its people. The roads, culverts, and drainage systems were designed for a climate that no longer exists. When the water came, they could not cope. Communities were cut off. Roads were destroyed. We were left confronting, for the first time, the true cost of building infrastructure for yesterday's weather in tomorrow's world.

We were still reeling from Namakwa when the floods returned and consumed the entire Province. The ZF Mgcawu, John Taolo Gaetsewe Frances Baard were hit. The Provincial Disaster Management Office, under CoGHSTA, compiled comprehensive reports in coordination with national counterparts, triggering the formal disaster relief processes.

We must place on record the progress being made at the national level. **The MINMEC of the Department of Transport, led by Minister Barbara Creecy,** has finalized a comprehensive report being presented to **National Treasury** to motivate for financial assistance to provinces for the rebuilding of flood-damaged infrastructure. This is a formal acknowledgement by national government that the scale of destruction exceeds what provincial budgets can absorb, and that a structured national response is required.

Our total backlog estimate stands at approximately **R4 billion.** The current technical assessment is as follows:

- **Frances Baard District:** 143 kilometres affected, estimated repair cost of **R204 million.**
- **John Taolo Gaetsewe District:** 431 kilometres affected, estimated repair cost of **R481.5 million.** This district, the engine of our manganese economy, bore the heaviest damage. **The Cardington bridge closure**, a critical crossing connecting mining communities to their economic lifeline, was addressed as a matter of emergency priority. No bridge in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District can remain closed without consequences that ripple across the entire Northern Cape economy.
- **Namakwa District:** 125.25 kilometres affected, estimated repair cost of **R174.5 million**, on top of the 2023 damage from which communities are still recovering.
- **Pixley ka Seme District:** 152 kilometres affected, estimated repair cost of **R113.5 million.**
- **ZF Mgcawu District:** 518 kilometres affected, estimated repair cost of **R74.5 million.**

In total, 1,369.25 kilometres of our provincial road network damaged, at an estimated repair cost of **R1.211 billion** for the current assessment, forming part of the broader **R4 billion** provincial reconstruction backlog. The National Disaster Management process has been formally activated. The MINMEC report is with Treasury. We will not stop making that case until the required budget is made available.

The yellow fleet.

Honourable Speaker, one of the most significant operational shifts in the history of this department took effect on 1 April 2026. With the dissolution of the Northern Cape Fleet Management Entity, the yellow fleet, our heavy road construction and maintenance machinery, was transferred directly into the department under Programme 3: Transport Infrastructure. This was a fundamental act of institutional accountability, planting responsibility firmly where it belongs.

Premier Dr. Zamani Saul and we launched this **R98 million Yellow Fleet** first in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District, before extending to Frances Baard. Both districts have experienced the heaviest flood damage in the province and carry the weight of our manganese economy on their roads daily. This fleet is not a ribbon-cutting exercise, but it is a functional arsenal of infrastructure delivery comprising graders, tipper trucks, water tankers, front-end loaders, TLBs, excavators, and other critical machinery, now under direct departmental control, dramatically reducing our reliance on outsourced services.

Operation Vala Zonke.

Honourable Speaker, no department can maintain 26,542 kilometres of road alone. Operation Vala Zonke is our living model of intergovernmental collaboration, combining provincial machinery, municipal capacity, and community labour to attack potholes, repair surfaces, and restore riding quality every day through the Root Out the Dust initiative.

The programme is already proving itself. Successful collaborations have been implemented in Sol Plaatje in Frances Baard, Siyancuma in Pixley ka Seme, Dawid Kruiper in ZF Mgcawu, Phokwane in Frances Baard, and Ga-Segonyana in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District. We will expand to additional municipalities across all five districts. Government will leave no municipality behind, because the quality of life of our residents cannot be determined by which side of a municipal boundary they happen to live on.

Capital programme 2026/27.

During this financial year, we will implement the following capital projects. The department will continue to maintain the Vaalputs road, known as the nuclear waste road, while sourcing funds for its upgrading.

Upgrading projects: MR974 between Laxey and Heuningvlei Phase 3; MR778 in Kakamas Phase 2; and DR3252 between Rooiwal and Vioolsdrift.

Honourable Speaker, we also wish to highlight a model of private sector and government co-investment that deserves recognition. The upgrading of DR3342 in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District is being advanced through a strategic partnership between the Department, Mkhulu Mine, and PMG Mining.

In the Frances Baard District, we are advancing a co-investment partnership with various stakeholders who will focus on road infrastructure, serving the Vaalharts agricultural corridor, one of the most productive irrigation schemes on the African continent and a cornerstone of the

Northern Cape's agricultural economy. The roads that serve Vaalharts are not merely transport routes. They are the arteries of a food production system that feeds communities and generates export revenue. Investing in them is investing in food security, rural livelihoods, and economic resilience.

These collaborations demonstrate that the Northern Cape's infrastructure development need not depend on government funding alone. Where mining operations benefit from provincial road infrastructure, we expect and welcome private sector co-investment. Where agricultural communities depend on provincial roads for their economic survival, we will find partners who share that understanding. We commend the companies stepping forward in both districts, and we intend to replicate this model across other economic corridors in the province where similar opportunities exist.

Rehabilitation projects: MR938 between Kathu and Hotazel, the Mamathwane road that is the backbone of our manganese mining corridor; MR913 between Barkley West and Windsorton; DR3112 between Hopetown and Douglas; TR38/1 in De Aar; and MR904 between R31 and Homevale.

Reseal projects: MR948 between Churchill and Bendel; TR38/1 between Phillipstown and De Aar; and MR807 between Plooysburg and Douglas.

Regravelling projects: MR791 between Petrusville and Colesberg Phase 2; MR745 between Komaggas and Kleinzee Phase 2; and MR886 between Askham and Van Zylsrus Phase 2.

We will maintain routine and critical bridge maintenance across the network, replace road signs, guardrails, and road markings that protect lives every single day, and work systematically to improve the paved road VCI from 65% toward 70% and hold it there. Through our internal roads teams, we will patch **23,000 square metres of potholes across the province in the 2026/27 financial year.**

Collaboration with SANRAL.

Honourable Speaker, our strategic partnership with SANRAL is one of the most important intergovernmental relationships this department manages, and it is delivering measurable results for the people of the Northern Cape. The SANRAL network in our Province currently stands at **4,472 kilometres,** the second largest SANRAL provincial network in the country, growing from 3,459 kilometres in 2021 through successive road transfers. A further 336 kilometres has been approved for incorporation, with the Gazette still to be published, pushing our **SANRAL network toward 4,808** kilometres. Beyond that, 868 kilometres of additional primary roads have been identified for potential future transfer. Every kilometre transferred to SANRAL is a kilometre maintained to national standards, directly relieving pressure on our provincial budget.

SANRAL currently has **six major construction projects underway in the Northern Cape** with a **combined value exceeding R1 billion,** including the R27 from Brandvlei to Kenhardt at R223.9 million, the N7 from Arakoop to Brakfontein at R251.7 million, the R382 from Alexander Bay Airport to

Port Nolloth at R169.7 million, and the N12 from Strydenburg to Hopetown at R205.6 million.

A further **twelve projects will be advertised in 2026/27, including the high-value N12 from Hopetown to Kimberley,** bringing additional hundreds of millions in road investment into our province.

SANRAL also maintains 18 routine road maintenance contracts across all five districts, covering every local municipality from the Richtersveld to Pixley ka Seme, complementing our own provincial maintenance programme with consistent national-standard upkeep.

However, we must place one critical matter on record. SANRAL has identified required construction projects on the manganese haul routes of the Northern Cape, including the N12 from Britstown to Strydenburg, valued at between R500 million and R1 billion, that currently have no budget allocation.

These roads carry the manganese that drives our provincial economy and underpins South Africa's export earnings. We call on National Treasury and the Department of Transport to prioritise funding for the manganese corridor as a matter of national economic urgency.

We commit to deepening this partnership and ensuring the Northern Cape attracts the largest possible share of SANRAL's national programme.

EPWP

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMES: EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (PROGRAMME 4).

Honourable Speaker, the Expanded Public Works Programme is not a welfare programme, nor a stopgap initiative. Under this administration, it has been fundamentally re-imagined as a platform for skills, dignity, and permanent economic inclusion.

EPWP Phase V runs from 2024 to 2029. The Northern Cape's five-year target is 112,995 work opportunities. In 2025/26, provincial departments collectively created 19,463 work opportunities, which is 108% of the annual target, benefiting 9,325 youth, 11,469 women, and 161 persons with disabilities. Municipalities created 4,749 work opportunities, reaching 115% of their target. These are not statistics. They are families supported, households sustained, and young people given their first foothold in the economy.

For 2026/27, we have committed to 22,643 work opportunities across all spheres, with 18,390 through Provincial Departments and **4,253** through municipalities. Our departmental target under Programme 4 is **3,605** work opportunities, delivered primarily through the Root Out the Dust Programme, the Poverty Relief Programme, and labour-intensive infrastructure maintenance. **We have secured a National EPWP Incentive Grant of R3.6 million to support this delivery.**

Skills and innovation.

Honourable Speaker, the numbers behind our Innovation and Empowerment Programme tell a story of real lives redirected.

In 2025/26; 17 youth completed the Construction Health and Safety Learnership; 43 participants completed Roads Construction Short Skills Programmes in Frances Baard and John Taolo Gaetsewe Districts; and 14 young beneficiaries progressed through the Electrical Construction Apprenticeship Programme, having completed their first year of theoretical and practical training.

Through our partnership with **Disabled People South Africa, 50 work opportunities were created exclusively for persons with disabilities, 25 from Namakwa District and 25 from the John Taolo Gaetsewe District, all completing the National Certificate: New Venture Creation at NQF Level 2.**

Through our BankSETA partnership, with R3.6 million invested, the Entrepreneurship Development Programme created 60 work opportunities, of which 44 benefited persons with disabilities.

For 2026/27, a total of 305 young people and 75 persons with disabilities will benefit from training interventions including the Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme, Carpentry and Cabinet Furniture Making, Construction Electrical Apprenticeships, Road Maintenance Short Skills, Entrepreneurship Development, and the Academic Empowerment Programme.

The EPWP Academic Empowerment Programme.

On 5 September 2025, Premier Dr. Zamani Saul and we officially launched the EPWP Academic Empowerment Programme at the Tol Speelman

Community Hall in Upington. This initiative reflects our commitment to ensuring that EPWP participants not only gain temporary employment but also acquire the education and skills needed to improve their long-term employability and socioeconomic prospects.

More than 600 participants across all five districts are currently accessing second-chance education, matric completion, ABET qualifications, and digital literacy, while employed on EPWP sites. The flexible nature of EPWP work creates space for learning that a conventional job does not. We have used that space deliberately.

In 2026/27, the department will expand the programme by enrolling 125 additional EPWP participants across all five districts, focusing on three key learning areas: matric completion, foundational literacy, and end-user computing.

Eight of our female EPWP beneficiaries who completed their End-User Computer course are here with us today. What this programme has done, not just for their skills but for their sense of themselves, is the measure that matters most.

The Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme.

Honourable Speaker, a few weeks ago we visited the Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme in Kimberley. Young men and women from across the Northern Cape are earning **Red Seal qualifications in refrigeration, welding, fitting and turning, and boilermaking, building skills that are internationally recognised and in chronic short supply**.

The programme is in its fifth cycle, with over 800 youth participating this year as **committed in Premier Saul's State of the Province Address.**

But what happens when the programme ends? The exit plan is absorption. Qualified graduates will enter the provincial government mainstream as permanent, salaried employees of this department. We are building a department that owns its fleet, employs its own artisans, and delivers with its own hands. Every Red Seal qualification earned on our sites is institutional capacity that does not walk out the door when a contract ends.

Honourable Speaker, the Phakamile Mabija graduates are not the end of a programme. They are the beginning of a new journey in a remodeled Department.

District Development Model and forging social compacts.

Honourable Speaker, infrastructure cannot be delivered by one Department working alone. Sustainable development requires shared responsibility, integrated planning, and partnerships that mobilize collective action at the point where government meets community.

We are pleased to report that the first District Road Forum was successfully established in the Z.F Mgcawu District, a district that has faced some of the most severe flood damage in our province and whose communities depend on reliable road infrastructure for their daily survival and economic participation. The Z.F Mgcawu forum has demonstrated the value of bringing municipal officials, community representatives, and departmental planners into a single accountability structure. We intend to establish similar forums in all remaining districts before the close of this financial year, ensuring every district in the Northern Cape has a formal, functional platform through which road infrastructure priorities are identified, planned, and monitored collaboratively.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Disabled People South Africa, ensuring that persons with disabilities are deliberate beneficiaries of our infrastructure and skills programmes rather than afterthoughts.

We are also finalizing a **Memorandum of Agreement with Supported Employment Enterprises, an entity of the Department of Employment and Labour,** to expand skills development, enterprise support, and local manufacturing opportunities linked to our infrastructure programme. This partnership closes a critical gap between skills training and economic absorption, connecting what we build to what our people can produce.

Financial management and programme allocations.

Honourable Speaker, sound financial management is not a back-office function. It is the foundation upon which every kilometre of road maintained, every building upgraded, and every work opportunity created either stands or falls. Without fiscal discipline, the best infrastructure plan is simply a wish list.

The total budget allocation for the Department of Roads and Public Works for the 2026/27 financial year is R2.347 billion, comprising R842 million in equitable share, including R40 million in additional provincial earmarked funding representing a 17% increase from the prior year, R1.5 billion through the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant, a 4% decrease, and R4 million through the EPWP Incentive Grant.

The programme allocations for 2026/27 are as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration: R221 million (9% of total budget)

- Programme 2: Public Works Infrastructure: R247 million (11% of total budget)

- Programme 3: Transport Infrastructure: R1.771 billion (75% of total budget)

- Programme 4: Community Based Programmes: R108 million (5% of total budget)

The concentration of **75% of the budget** in Transport Infrastructure reflects the scale of our road network obligations and the severity of the maintenance backlog we are working to address. Our financial management priorities are clear; to strengthen governance and internal controls, improving expenditure and cash-flow management, supporting audit readiness, ensuring clean supply chain oversight, and paying every valid invoice within 30 days without exception. We will continue utilizing technology, data analytics, and financial monitoring tools to ensure that every rand entrusted to this department delivers maximum value to the people of the Northern Cape Province.

Conclusion.

Madam Speaker, our commitment has never been stronger. This budget reaffirms our dedication to building a capable state centred on the needs of the people, focused on the future, and responsive to the challenges of our time.

We will not always get everything right, however, we will always show up. We will always be honest about the challenges and we will never stop working, because behind every kilometre of road unrepaired, there is a family waiting; behind every work opportunity not created, there is a young person still hoping; and behind every building not maintained, there is a community that deserves better.

In the spirit of those who came before us, who built this democracy with sacrifice and determination, let us continue our journey toward a Province where every road connects, every building serves, and every person matters.

Madam Speaker, we hereby table Budget Vote 5 for the Department of Roads and Public Works for the 2026/27 financial year.

I thank you.

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