



STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

26 FEBRUARY 2026 . 09H00

SPRINGBOK. NAMAKWA DISTRICT . BERGSIG SPORTS GROUND



Modern, Growing and Successful Province | South Africa's New Growth Front

STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE PREMIER OF THE
NORTHERN CAPE, DR. ZAMANI SAUL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING
OF THE 3rd SITTING OF THE SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

SPRINGBOK, NAMAKWA DISTRICT

26 FEBRUARY 2026

**Speaker of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, Honourable Ms Newrene
Klaaste,**

Members of the Northern Cape Provincial Executive Council,

Minister of Minerals and Petroleum Resources, Mr. Gwede Samson Mantashe

**Deputy Minister for the Department of International Relations and Cooperation,
Honourable Mr Alvin Botes,**

Former Premier of the NC, Ms Sylvia Lucas

The Chief Whip, Honourable Dr Norman Shushu,

**The Chief Whip of the National Council of Provinces, Honourable Mr. Kenny
Mmoiemang**

The leader of the Opposition, Honourable Dr. Isak Fritz,

The Leader of the EFF, Honourable Mr. Shadrack TIhaole,

The Leader of the Patriotic Alliance, Honourable Ms. Sharifa Ferris,

The Leader of the Freedom Front Plus, Honourable Mr. Theodorus Joubert,

Members of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces,

Members of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature,

**Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi Pelonomi
Toto and all our Traditional Leaders**

The Mayor of Nomakhoi Rodney Kritzinger

Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ms Tendai from the Consulate of Zimbabwe (1980), Her Excellency Consul General of Angola (1975) Elsa Caposso Vicence and Ms Sياما Sakaria, first Secretary of Consul of Namibia (1990). We used to celebrate your liberation as it served as revolutionary inspiration to us. THREE OF FRONTLINE STATES ARE HERE. SWAPO in Namibia, FRELIMO in Mozambique, MPLA in Angola and ANC in South Africa, ZANU and ZAPU in Zimbabwe.

Judge President of the Northern Cape High Court Division, Judge Pule Tlaletsi,
Heads of State Security Services,

Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association Northern Cape,
Mr. Lulama Nkumbi,

Mayors and Councillors,

Heads of State Institutions supporting our Constitutional Democracy,

The Director General and Heads of Departments & Government Officials,

Provincial Secretary of the ANC and other political parties,

Leaders of the Alliance & Mass Democratic Movement Formations,

Leaders of Organised Labour and Civil Society,

Business leaders,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Fellow citizens of the Northern Cape

Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable Speaker, on behalf of the Provincial Government and the people of the Northern Cape, let me start by expressing our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to the families of loved ones that still remain trapped at the Ekapa Combined Shaft. The Province is deeply affected by this tragedy, and we all share the grief and pain it is causing. During this painful and uncertain period, the affected families must know that we stand with them in solidarity.

Agbare Speaker, vandag wil ek graag my opregte waardering uitspreek vir die voorreg om hierdie Provinsiale Reede hier in Namakwaland te kan lewer. Dames en Here, vandag is ons bymekaar hier in die noordwestelike deel van die Noord-Kaap - 'n streek met 'n diep geskiedkundige erfenis.

Die Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe was die eerste bewoners van hierdie land. Die !Xam, 'n San-stam, het oor duisende jare die land en die hemelruim bestudeer. Hulle het kennisstelsels ontwikkel om die aarde en die sterre te verstaan. Om die rede, word die San deur sommiges as die eerste sterrekundiges beskou.

Terwyl ons die provinsie moderniseer, bly dit belangrik om die rol van ons tradisionele leiers te erken, as draers van die geskiedenis en kennis wat die brug vorm tussen antieke kennisstelsels en van die mees gevorderde tegnologiese- en sterrekundige projekte in die wêreld.

Honourable Speaker, earlier this week, we re-opened the Steinkopf community clinic, that was refurbished at an amount of R12.5 million. The clinic will provide primary healthcare to over 9 000 community members in Steinkopf and surrounding areas. We call on the community to jealousy guard this healthcare facilities.

Yesterday, together with Vedanta Zinc International, we officially opened the JF 'Boeboe' Van Wyk Oncology Centre. The R22-million investment is set to bring specialised cancer treatment and care closer to the people of Namakwa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to congratulate and welcome Honourable Mervin Cloete to his first house sitting as a Member of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature. As a member of the Legislature, you represent the aspirations of the people of the Northern Cape. We trust that you will serve with the greatest humility.

Honourable Speaker, this year, we will celebrate 30 Years of the adoption of the South African Constitution, which is regarded as the most progressive constitution in the world. In addition, we also mark 50 years since the June 16 Youth Uprising of 1976. A significant moment in which young people demonstrated remarkable courage in defiance of a brutal system of apartheid oppression.

We will also commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. This march by a 20 000 strong crowd of South African women from different race groups and all walks of life. This was a clear display of bravery and courage. They confronted the Apartheid government to fight for their freedom and the freedom of many generations after them. We salute their determination and trust that their exemplary actions will be emulated by the current and future generations. Today, we present this SOPA in honour of the roaring young lions of 1976 and imbokodo of 1956.

Honourable Speaker, in 2019, we presented before this august House our vision to build a Modern, Growing and Successful Province. When we articulated this vision, we agreed that such a province is one where:

- The health profile of its residents is improved.
- Where we care for the most vulnerable amongst us and through that we affirm that their lives have dignity, value and meaning.
- We are at the cutting edge of the fourth Industrial Revolution and prioritise quality education.
- Its youth have reasonable opportunities and are allowed to dream.
- Where our people, especially women and children, can feel free to enjoy public spaces without fear of being molested or abused.
- People who are differently abled are embraced with dignity and provided with equal opportunities.

Since then, we have made considerable strides. We have been able to achieve the following milestones, together with our stakeholders and social partners:

- We saw a steady growth in the Provincial GDP from R119 billion in 2019 to R166 billion in 2025, this has been an increase of almost R50 billion.
- The number of persons employed increased by 18 thousand from quarter 3 of 2025 to quarter 4 of 2025. This means that the total number of employed people increased from 319 000 in the third quarter to 337 000 in the fourth quarter of 2025.
- The Northern Cape experienced the biggest decline in the unemployment rate from 31,2% to 27.1% in quarter 4 of 2025. The Province recorded a notable 4.1% reduction in official unemployment, the highest in the country.

- The proportion of the Northern Cape population who live in poverty declined from 64,6% in 2006 to 42,3%.
- The Gini coefficient was 0,658 in 2019; it currently stands at 0,608. This is an indication that the income disparity between the rich and the poor in the Northern Cape is decreasing.
- Over the past five years in the Northern Cape, there has been a noticeable improvement in the Human Development Index; we are now one of the six provinces in the country with an HDI above 0.71. This reflects the strides we have made to improve the quality of life through public education, public health, and household income.
- We recorded a matric pass rate of 87.79%. This is the highest matric pass rate since the inception of the National Senior Certificate Examination in 2008. We are the most improved province in the country for two consecutive years, and currently, the gap between ourselves and the number one province is a mere 2.8%.
- The number of learners increased from Two Hundred and Eighty Three Thousand Two Hundred and Thirty One (283 231) in 2019 to Three Hundred and Fourteen Thousand Two Hundred and Eighty Five (314 285) in 2026. This increase is enabled by better access due increased number of new schools we built, and our online registration and placement system we initiated.
- The number of teachers increased from Nine Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy (9 270) in 2019 to Nine Thousand Six Hundred and Sixty Two (9 662) in 2026.
- A total of 87% of Northern Cape households use the public health care.
- Life expectancy for both males and females continues to increase. The life expectancy for males rose from 50.1 years in 2001 to an anticipated 59.5 years by 2026. For females, life expectancy increased from 54.3 years in 2001 to a projected 66 years in 2026.
- The in-facility infant mortality rate decreased from 17.3 per 1000 live births to 12.5. The maternal mortality rate was 109,9 per 100,000 in 2019 and reduced to 90,4 per 100,000. This constitutes a major achievement towards this Sustainable Development Goal.

- The HIV prevalence is on a downward trend in the Northern Cape, from 4% to 2% of the population of the province.
- The province successfully managed to reach the '1.1 million close the gap campaign' target in September last year by successfully enrolling 19 667 People Living with HIV into treatment; which surpassed our target of 17 720, and this marks a significant milestone. This campaign aims to bring 1.1 million people living with HIV, in the country, who know their status but are not on treatment, back into care.
- Compared to other provinces, we are ranked fifth overall in terms of achievement against 'Close the Gap' targets.
- Access to basic services has increased, water (95,1%), electricity (90,9%), sanitation (84,3%), and refuse removal (65,8%).
- In 2019, the Province started with only two clean PFMA audit outcomes, today we are proud to report that out of 13 auditees, the province has recorded 9 clean audits over this period, which is a testament to good governance and accountability.
- The Northern Cape accounted for just 3.0% of South Africa's total contact crimes, the lowest among all provinces.
- According to the Census 2022 report, 71.2% households in the province have access to internet. This stood at 25.9% in 2011. Through targeted and committed investment by our telecommunications companies, this figure is at a constant upward trajectory.
- Increased funding and investment in both social and economic infrastructure has seen an investment of approximately R 30 Billion in the last five years.
- For the current financial year, we invested over Two Hundred and Five Million Rand (R205 444 060) for small-scale farmer support through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and the illima/Letsema fund. From these funds, over Seventy Five Million Rand (R75 190 000) is earmarked for infrastructure projects which stands to benefit 435 smallholder farmers.
- For the new financial year, R226 million has been allocated to support small-scale farmers, with R100 million allocated to infrastructure development. This will further enable support to 550 smallholder farmers.

- During the last year, we transferred 14,893 hectares of land to women and youth, worth more than Forty Four Million Rand (R44 320 750.00). We spent a further Thirty Three Million Rand (R33 508 600.00) on post-settlement support.
- The Northern Cape has a wind energy potential of 846 Gigawatt and a solar energy capacity of 11,400 Gigawatt. What enables our capacity is our high levels of wind and radiation. In the Northern Cape 84% of the land has low-intensity activities, and 57% of the available land is suitable for solar and wind generation.
- The share of mining to the Provincial GDP is 19% and this sector continues to grow. However, the increase in tertiary sectors' contribution to the GDP dilutes the share of the mining sector (trade, finance and Household consumption).
- Establishment of Special Investigative Unit and South African National Road Agency (SANRAL) provincial offices
- The Independent Power Producers Programme has in the past 8 years directed nearly R82 billion to the Northern Cape.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when we highlight some of these achievements, it is not because we are blind to the current challenges that we face, it is an assertion that the work has long started and continues, and so does our collective commitment and drive.

Honourable Members, the province has adopted a mission-driven approach to governance, which does not only focus on compliance, but on outcomes that matter most to our people. This approach allows us to focus our attention, resources and technical support on high-impact priorities in public health care, agriculture and rural development projects, human settlements, and infrastructure.

In support hereof, we have established integrated, multi-disciplinary support teams drawn from across government. These teams bring together expertise in monitoring and evaluation, finance, human resources, infrastructure, ICT, Policy and Planning, legal services, and risk management. Their mandate is simple but firm: to support departments, unblock challenges, verify progress on the ground, and ensure accountability for agreed turnaround actions.

In the Department of Health, this translated into a structured 10-Point Turnaround Action Plan, supported by unannounced visits to public health facilities. These visits are practical interventions that focus on leadership stability, the condition of infrastructure, staffing, equipment, medicines, ICT systems, and the experience of care by patients. Where gaps are identified, remedial actions are agreed upon and monitored monthly.

Honourable Speaker, I have already concluded unannounced visits to the Manne Dipico Hospital in Colesberg and the Prof ZK Mathews Hospital in Barkly West. In the next three weeks, we will intensify this programme, not only to public health facilities, but to all our infrastructure projects.

Similarly, in the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform, targeted support is provided through structured oversight of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). This is to ensure that resources invested in rural development translate into sustainable livelihoods and food security. To sustain this turnaround, we have also developed an Action Plan for the Department, with tangible, implementable deliverables, which will be monitored monthly.

In human settlements, we have placed focused oversight on the R1 billion housing programme. The strengthened coordination between planning, finance, and implementation will accelerate delivery. This will help to restore confidence in government's ability to meet housing needs of our people. Honourable Speaker, we have concluded an assessment of the 1 Billion Rand Housing Project, which will result in the activation of strategic interventions to mitigate challenges to accelerate the implementation of the project.

Honourable Speaker, a major milestone thus far is the endorsement of the Northern Cape Infrastructure Master Plan 2040, a single, fiscally realistic pipeline that guides planning, budgeting, and implementation across government. This master plan will enable us to prioritise affordable, implementation-ready projects and marks a shift from fragmented spending to well-managed programmes that deliver impact. We must ensure that all our infrastructure projects are derived **ON SPEC, ON TIME AND ON BUDGET.**

To achieve this, we must continue to strengthen technical capacity, professionalise public administration, and improve coordination from the centre of government. We will consolidate the gains already made, deepen accountability, and ensure that the public service is agile, ethical, and responsive to the needs of our people.

Honourable Speaker; our economic trajectory is unfolding amid a complex and uncertain global environment. Geopolitical tensions, shifting trade regimes, and policy uncertainty continue to reshape global value chains and commodity markets. While global uncertainty remains a concern, improved bilateral trade, positions the province to sustain export momentum, deepen value-chain participation, and strengthen its integration with Asian markets.

The recent strengthening of trade relations between South Africa and China, including the signing of a trade agreement that grants expanded duty-free access to selected South African exports, provides an important buffer. We closely monitor developments in the United States about the 30% reciprocal trade tariff.

Beyond trade tensions among major global economies, our mining sector continues to anchor export earnings, agriculture remains our largest employer, and the ever-growing green economy provides an avenue for job creation, diversification, and localisation.

A labor-absorbing economic growth trajectory is required to achieve our 2030 target to increase our GDP to R200 billion and create 60,000 additional new jobs from our 2025 base. We will advance this by realising our R950 billion-investment pipeline and by addressing our investment challenges.

We project Northern Cape as the new growth front for our country, enabled by our resource profile, which includes minerals, energy, infrastructure, and agriculture. The resource and energy development investments provide our country with a new growth front beyond the current industrial triangle of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape.

Our aim is to maintain our sectoral focus and build on it. This will require moving beyond sectoral focus into value-added activities, manufacturing, and new-horizon opportunities that leverage our strengths. Key is to ensure global access through the

Boegoebaai harbour and Special Economic Zone, with value chain and logistics linkages to the Northern Cape Industrial Corridor.

Along this corridor, we have well-placed Special Economic Zones and industrial parks that connect to the broader SADC region. The SADC corridor will ultimately extend up to the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme. The consolidation of all the production factors, namely resources, energy, logistics, human capital, and basic infrastructure, will position us to create a globally competitive investment destination for our investors.

Dames en Here, 'n groot deel van ons fokus om hierdie 60,000 volhoubare werkseleentheid te genereer, sal wees deur middel van ons mikro en klein besighede in groeiende ondernemings te omskep. Ons mense moet deelneem en voordeel trek uit hierdie ekonomiese groei.

As the provincial government, we spent R8.47 billion on procurement in the previous and current financial years. The largest share, R4,64 billion, went to black-owned enterprises, R1,64 billion to women-owned enterprises, R950 million to youth-owned enterprises, and R48.7 million to people with disabilities. While this demonstrates steady progress, efforts to enhance the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in the economy needs to be strengthened.

Through the Blended Finance Fund, a high-impact enterprise in Namakwa secured R12.8 million. This created 37 new jobs and sustained an additional 49 jobs. To date, R12 million has been transferred to the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) to expand opportunities for Northern Cape entrepreneurs. I encourage you to seize this opportunity and apply.

Honourable Speaker, the Northern Cape's tourism sector has shown remarkable recovery post-COVID. Through our Visitor Tracking System, we conducted economic impact assessments for key events. These include the Wildeklawer Festival, Yonder Hartsfees, and the Diamonds and Doring's Kimberley Big Hole Marathon. The findings indicate an economic impact of R247 million, which sustained 504 jobs in the province.

Through the Kimberley Diamond Cup, we have delivered 12 events nationwide, reached over 800 young people as participants, injected more than R800 000 into youth earnings, and attracted 30 million viewers across all digital platforms.

We have completed five tourism infrastructure projects, inclusive of the Moffat Mission Station Master Plan, the designs for the Carnarvon Community Square, the Mayibuye precinct, and facilities in the Richtersveld.

To reignite economic growth in the broader Sol Plaatje Local Municipality we launched the Diamond and Dorings Five Iconic Events programme. The portfolio includes the Diamonds and Dorings Jazz Festival - The Experience; the Diamonds and Dorings Kimberley Big Hole Marathon, which, following its successful inaugural edition, now offers the second-largest prize money on the national marathon circuit and is poised for growth; and the Diamonds and Dorings Kimberley Diamond Cup. Further expansion includes the Wildeklawer Absa Sports Festival and the Yonder Hartsfees Carnival. Sol Plaatje will serve as the pilot area and we will explore possibilities to replicate the model across the province.

McDougalls Bay in Port Nolloth received Blue Flag Pilot status for the first time, placing the province on the national coastal tourism map and creating a differentiated tourism product for domestic and international markets.

Honourable Speaker, our largest employer in the province is the agricultural sector, which contributes significantly to household food security, yet only 15.5% of households were involved in agriculture in 2024. Household participation in the agricultural sector will be increased, with special emphasis on marginalised groups.

The aftermath of the 2024 summer rainfall deficit, compounded by below-average early winter rainfall in 2025, has led to a rapid decline in vegetation conditions, particularly in the Namakwa district and parts of ZF Mgcawu district. The drought, particularly here in the Namakwa district and the ZF Mgcawu district, has been classified as a disaster affecting our province. This will enable availability of resources to assist the 2,510 affected farms.

Through the implementation of Kaonafatso ya Dikgomo, farmers in the John Taolo Gaetsewe (JTG), Namakwa, ZF Mgcawu (ZFM), and Frances Baard districts were supported through the distribution of selected livestock. To strengthen farmer support and livestock improvement, additional livestock will be distributed during this year. A total of R13.5 million from the Ilima/Letsema Grant is allocated to support subsistence producers in the province as part of the Food Security initiative to fight hunger and

poverty. An additional R6.7 million from the Fetsa Tlala Programme is allocated for vulnerable households.

In addition, upgrading the Vaalharts/Taung Irrigation Scheme is critical to sustain rural livelihoods and boosting agricultural production.

As the largest irrigation scheme in Southern Africa, covering 35,300 hectares, the project includes construction of overnight reservoirs, installation of subsurface drainage systems, development of communal outfall waterlines and discharge pipelines. It further includes the expansion of soil conservation measures across irrigation zones. The projected Investment is R8 billion over 20 years.

It is also important to note that the Northern Cape recorded its first laboratory-confirmed case of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) on February 10, 2026. The affected farm was immediately placed under quarantine to limit the spread of the disease. The Province secured 600 doses of the emergency vaccine, delivered on February 11, 2026, enabling us to create a buffer around the infected property. In addition, 50,000 doses from the 1 million doses that arrived in the country during February, have been secured.

Honourable Speaker, the holistic energy sector is a key competitive advantage and enabler for the Northern Cape industrial corridor and the South African Just Energy Transition. Our Province produces nearly three times as much renewable energy as it consumes. Furthermore, the Province accounts for 60% of the country's renewable energy projects. We have also been allocated the largest share of the grid expansion under the current allocation, with nearly 900 km of the total 1,400 km.

A major government investment is the Upington Solar Park. This is an active partnership between the three spheres of Government, namely the National Department of Electricity and Energy, Provincial Government, the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality, and the Office of the Independent Power Producers, enabling local smelters and large AI data centers.

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism supports Dawid Kruiper and Ga-Segonyana Municipality to include renewable energy in their municipal energy supply strategy. Post these two municipalities, it will be rolled out to other municipalities in the province.

In our ongoing quest to find alternative energy solutions, our drive for oil and gas exploration along our coastline, and for gas beyond the coast, is of particular interest to us, and we consider it to be critical to the green hydrogen sector. The province is collaborating with the Petroleum Association of South Africa and investors to realise this investment.

Honourable Members, road infrastructure is a critical economic enabler for the province. The projected budget spend for road upgrades is estimated at just over Three Hundred and Two Million Rand (R302 381 000). A further amount of Two Hundred and Ninety Two Million Rand (R292 263 000) will be spent on road re-gravel, and One Hundred and Fifty Million Rand (R150 283 766) will be spent on road reconstruction.

The collaboration between the Northern Cape Provincial Government and the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) yielded significant results. The Northern Cape Province consists of 26 530 km of Provincial network. The process of transferring an additional 649.99 km of key strategic economic roads to SANRAL is underway. In addition, the Minister of Transport , Ms. Barbra Creecy, has approved the transfer 336 km of road to SANRAL from the Province.

Honourable Members, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Phase five is currently in its second year of implementation. To date, the Northern Cape has created 38,848 work opportunities, representing 34% of the five-year target of 112,995 work opportunities.

The Community Works Programme (CWP) currently provides 18,468 job opportunities for vulnerable groups, which include youth, women, and persons with disabilities. Both programmes are undergoing a remodelling phase. The programmes will focus primarily on youth, introduce a maximum tenure for beneficiaries, enterprise development and emphasise upskilling to enhance employability and sustainability.

Honourable Speaker, our government is committed to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected against extreme poverty. Consistent with the commitment to optimise social protection coverage, as at 31 December 2025 SASSA has disbursed 550 920 grants to the value of R603 202 450 per month, this translates to

approximately R7,2 billion per annum. This is a significant increase since 2019 where 482 705 were disbursed to the value of R4,9 billion.

The number of grant beneficiaries has also increase from 286,597 in 2019 to 399 943 by December 2025. This is a clear demonstration that as a government we are determined to eradicate poverty and ensure that no household is left without their basic needs being met.

This social assistance support is provided to 34,4% of the population in the province which has led to significant decrease in poverty. In 2015, Lower Bound Poverty levels were recorded at 64.4% and this has drastically reduced to 42,2% in 2025.

Honourable Speaker, the introduction of the SRD-R370 has also contributed to the priority of eradicating poverty. At the end of December 2025, 307 374 beneficiaries were paid, this translated to a cash injection of approximately R102 million.

Notwithstanding the fact that there is increase in the number of people employed, un-employment still has a direct impact on the demand for social assistance, particularly the Child Support Grant (CSG) and Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant. It will be our priority, through collaborative efforts with various stakeholders, to ensure that our graduates and those with artisanal skills are linked with economic opportunities or further training to ensure that they are able to contribute meaningfully to the province's economy.

Honourable Speaker, the province, in partnership with Transnet, has made progress towards the realisation of the Boegoebaai port. The Project preparation funding has been successfully secured, whilst negotiations with the Richtersveld Communal Property Association (CPA) are ongoing. A Market Demand Study has been completed, and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is nearing completion.

We are now able to substantively engage with the Department of Transport to institute a dispensation to advance the port proclamation and construction.

Honourable Members, our work does not stop here; progress on the 2024-designated Namakwa SEZ is at an advanced stage with bulk infrastructure construction scheduled for the 2027/28 financial year, which will create an estimated 2,000 direct jobs.

We therefore welcome Vedanta Zinc International's R21 billion pledge towards the Namakwa SEZ. The Gamsberg Phase 1 project, valued at R16 Billion, is complete. Phase 2 has begun and will create up to 2,500 construction jobs and 1,000 permanent operational jobs. Phase 2 of this project enables the construction of the zinc smelter. The Namakwa District will be host to the Frontier Rare Earths Investment, which will unlock R300 million investment in the first phase.

The JTG multi-nodal Industrial Park prioritizes mine supplies, manganese, iron ore beneficiation, and manufacturing. A key milestone is the donation of 91 hectares of land by Kumba Iron Ore. Furthermore, the Upington Industrial Park project has progressed well, with phase 1 completed, and will proceed with applications for the subsequent phases. This Upington node focuses primarily on renewable energy, agriculture, and logistics. Beyond their traditional sectors, the industrial parks will support Airports Company South Africa's aircraft maintenance, repair, overhaul investments, renewable energy inputs, and circular-economy opportunities.

Honourable Speaker, we must balance our economic ambitions with our environmental responsibilities. In our province, sustainable development, requires a balance rather than a trade-off between economic growth and environmental integrity. Environmental protection and conservation are non-negotiable in our pursuit of economic expansion.

Our province, particularly this district, are home to a unique, national strategic asset: the Vaalputs Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility, the only one of its kind on the African continent. A planned investment of R2.5 billion will be directed to this facility, reinforcing Vaalputs' role as the national hub for nuclear waste management and supporting long-term nuclear security.

Honourable Members, as a Province, we continue to invest heavily in our Apex priorities, which are Education and Health. This investment is characterised by universal access, systems improvement, governance reforms, and the introduction of technological innovations. Our investment in children's development is demonstrated through sustained, systemic strengthening and measurable improvements in learner performance.

The Province has positioned Early Childhood Development as the most decisive investment in the Province's long-term education outcomes. With 394 registered Early Childhood Development centres now formalised, a 90% completion rate achieved through the Bana Pele registration drive, and 357 centres approved under strengthened compliance standards, the Province has significantly professionalised and stabilised the early learning landscape.

Access to Grade RR and Grade R has reached 21,323 learners across 393 schools, representing 91% coverage of eligible children, while practitioner development is accelerated through 247 educators enrolled in NQF Level 4–5 programmes and 25 completing B.Ed. Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications.

Strategic infrastructure partnerships in high-need communities, coupled with readiness interventions aligned to the compulsory implementation of the BELA Act, demonstrate that the Province is not merely expanding access but deliberately building a quality-driven, compliant, and future-oriented early learning system. This sustained investment lays the foundation for stronger literacy trajectories, improved progression rates, and long-term socio-economic mobility for the children of the Northern Cape.

Furthermore, the Province continues to invest significantly in school infrastructure. 10 new and replacement school projects have been activated across feasibility, design, and initiation phases at a total cost of R1,507 billion.

Honourable Members, through the Transversal Premiers Bursary Fund, we continue to expand access to higher education and priority skills areas. In 2025, we awarded 140 new bursaries and 142 continuing bursary awards, strengthening opportunities in fields that are critical for the development of our Province. Our focus remains firmly on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), as these fields are essential for the future of our Province. Targeted interventions such as “Duin in die Weg – Access 4 Success” are already yielding positive outcomes.

To date, 20 learners have been provisionally accepted into STEM-related university programmes for 2026. This programme is supported through partnerships with CUT, CPUT, and Sol Plaatje University. In addition, we are strengthening the agricultural skills pipeline through our partnership with the Vine Academy and Model Farm, located in Kakamas within the ZF Mgcawu District. This partnership is designed to address human resource capacity and skills gaps in the agricultural sector, particularly within

the vine fruit industry, and to expand the research and development capabilities of South Africa's viticulture sector.

Collectively, SETAs invested R327.6 million in human capital development in the Northern Cape, benefiting 11 475 learners across apprenticeships, internships, learnership, skills programmes, and bursaries.

Honourable Members, Government continues to invest heavily in health infrastructure to improve access, quality of care, and patient outcomes across the province. Cumulatively, we will spend R955 million on improving our public health care facilities in the Province:

- The Galeshewe Day Hospital, will be upgraded into a 161-bed district hospital at a cost of R300 million with the refurbishment project starting in April 2026;
- Phase 1 of the Dithakong Primary Health Care facility was completed in April 2025 at a cost of R25 million. Phase 2, of the Community Health Centre is currently underway and expected to be completed by July 2026 at a cost of R41 million.
- The new Schmidtsdrift Clinic is scheduled for completion end of February 2026, with an investment of R48 million.
- The Steinkopf Clinic Rehabilitation, following fire damage, was successfully completed in December 2025 at a cost of R12 million.
- Upgrading of the Griekwastad Community Health Centre is on track to be concluded by the end of February 2026, with a total investment of R25 million.
- The Keimoes Hospital Upgrading, set for completion in April 2026, with an investment of R40 million.
- The Logobate Community Health Centre in John Taolo Gaetsewe, upgrading to be completed by July 2026 at a cost of R20 million.
- The Tshwaragano Gateway Clinic Revamp, is scheduled for completion in April 2026.
- The Kuruman Hospital Accident and Emergency facility is scheduled to be completed in February 2027, with a total investment of R68 million.
- The new Roodepan Community Health Centre, construction will begin in June 2026, with an investment of R250 million.

- The Connie Vorster Hospital upgrading, will commence in June 2026 at R60 million.
- The Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital Accident & Emergency Expansion, will start in May 2026 at a cost of R30 million and
- The Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital Laundry Upgrading, is scheduled to commence this year, with a budget of R61 million.

These investments reflect our continued commitment to modernise healthcare infrastructure, expand access, and ensure high-quality, patient-centred services across the Northern Cape.

Honourable Members, the province continues to invest in sport and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles, community engagement, and inclusive participation. A total of R51 million from the MIG Sport Infrastructure Grant will be allocated to the following projects, at R10 million each:

1. Upgrade of Matjieskloof Sport Grounds - Nama Khoi Municipality
2. Upgrade of Strydenburg Sport Facility - Thembelihle Local Municipality
3. Upgrade of Fraserburg Sport Facility - Karoo Hooland Municipality
4. Construction of Van Wyksvlei Sport Facility - Kareeberg Municipality
5. Upgrade of Kuilsville Sport Facility - Kgatelopele Municipality

An additional R1 million will be allocated to Gamagara Municipality for the research and design of a High-Performance Aquatics Centre in Kathu.

Honourable Speaker and Members of this august house, the state of local government is worrisome but we are determined to turn this around. Our immediate focus is on the areas that matter most to communities; these are water and sanitation, electricity, roads, waste management, and human settlements.

To strengthen municipal performance and restore confidence in local government, the Province has adopted a focused Municipal 10-Point Plan. This intervention is practical, time-bound, people-centred, and aimed at fighting the scourge of corruption. It prioritises strengthened public participation, institutional stabilisation, improved service delivery in hotspot wards, and a more responsive municipal communication system.

Through this programme, municipalities are required to intensify ward meetings, community imbizos, and door-to-door engagements so that communities remain at the centre of planning and accountability. At the same time, we will enforce disciplined financial management, improve billing systems, strengthen by-law enforcement, and closely monitor coalition municipalities to ensure governance stability and continuity of services.

Most importantly, this Plan drives operational improvements in the areas that residents experience daily. Municipalities are required to accelerate infrastructure maintenance and fill critical senior management vacancies, with suitably qualified and experienced individuals. Quarterly performance management reviews, strengthened consequence management, and credible IDP and budget processes will reinforce accountability across the local government system.

Collectively, these measures are designed to close the gap between improved compliance and real service delivery outcomes. We give you our commitment that we will keep a close eye on our municipalities to ensure that they function with the urgency, discipline, and community focus required to deliver reliable services to our people.

In the area of human settlements, government has completed numerous interventions by accelerating housing delivery and restoring dignity through security of tenure. Through the Northern Cape Accelerated Housing Project, implemented with the support of the Development Bank of Southern Africa, construction is underway across all districts, with houses progressing through different construction milestones and completed units handed over to beneficiaries. At the same time, the province has intensified efforts to unblock projects, prioritise repairs and maintenance, and expand title deed registration, recognising that dignity is secured by ensuring ownership, services and function

Ladies and Gentlemen; the province has demonstrated steadily improving performance in the management and expenditure of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), which has generally translated into increased allocations through National Treasury's stopping and reallocation process. Between 2019 and 2025, expenditure

performance improved from 64% to 85%, enabling the province to secure cumulative net additional funding of R90.08 million.

For this financial year, the province has been allocated R504.63 million. Sustained improvement in expenditure performance remains critical to protecting future allocations and accelerating the delivery of basic municipal infrastructure.

Honourable Members, we are mindful of the water challenges in some of our municipalities, and as Government we are making concerted efforts to address water and sanitation infrastructure. Since 2016, there has been an investment of over Four Billion (R4 [293 749 295](#)) in the province in relation to water and sanitation, which can be broken down into water at over three billion (R3 [769 695 434](#)) and sanitation at over half a billion (R524 053 860). This investment was primarily for the extension of water and sanitation services, refurbishment of infrastructure, resource development, and infrastructure upgrades. More than 95% of the households in the Northern Cape have access to potable water and reliable sanitation. For the current financial year, investment in water and sanitation is at almost a Billion Rand (R983 714 000), and expenditure is at just over Six Hundred Million Rand (R601 667 000).

The current infrastructure investment in the province is also geared towards sustaining the reliability of the water supply and extending essential services to all our communities. Census 2022 places the Northern Cape as the country's third highest province in terms of provision of water services in households, it also places us fourth in the country in terms of reliable sanitation.

We are clear in our resolve to work tirelessly to ensure that municipalities fulfil their basic obligations: of fixing potholes, removing refuse regularly, keeping communities clean and green, and providing clean water and sanitation. They must build in-house capacity, especially functional yellow fleet and skilled personnel, fix water-leaks and power outages, and deliver basic services.

Honourable Members, the province recognises the strong link between teenage pregnancy and Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Both are rooted in unequal power relations, harmful social norms, and limited access to protection for young women and girls. Addressing teenage pregnancy is a critical component of the GBVF prevention and response strategy.

In 2025, a multi-sectoral teenage pregnancy plan targeted hotspot districts, with 835 learner pregnancies recorded among school-going adolescents aged 10-19; quarterly reports indicated 1,628 cases provincially. These efforts aim to protect girls' rights, reduce vulnerability, support continued education, and empower young women to pursue safer, healthier life pathways.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in November 2025, the South African government officially declared Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) a national disaster under Section 23 of the Disaster Management Act. This then classifies the epidemic as a top priority, enabling faster funding, stronger inter-departmental coordination, and rapid responses to crises.

The Provincial inter-ministerial committee (IMC) on GBVF, comprising the four main departments, namely the Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison, Department of Social Development, Department of Education & the Department of Health, is responsible for the effective management of the pandemic. Before the end of the current financial year, the Inter-Ministerial Committee will convene a multi-sectoral symposium to develop concrete plans and responses in light of the GBVF disaster. These plans will serve as the blueprint for the province-wide intervention on this disaster. Efforts to reduce this heinous crime are starting to yield some positive outcomes.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion I appreciate the contribution of opposition parties in creating a positive political environment in the province. Our politics are focused on improving the quality of life of the people of the Northern Cape, rather than point-scoring and empty rhetoric. Therefore, thanks to the opposition parties for their maturity, especially during tough times.

Madam Speaker, I also want to thank the colleagues in the Provincial Executive Council for their continued and unwavering support. Also want to thank the entire team in the Office of the Premier for their dedication and commitment to their work. I can't miss thanking my family for the love and support.

Honourable Speaker, we are fired up, we are also pumped up to successfully implement the mandate of this seventh administration.

Thank You.