



DEPARTMENTAL **BUDGET VOTES**

2025 VOTE 12

HON. N.B SIFUBA
Sport, Arts, Culture and
Recreation



FRIDAY, 06 JUNE 2025



Fourth Raadsaal,
Bloemfontein



10h00



sport, arts, culture & recreation

Department of
Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE



A **FREE STATE** THAT **WORKS ALL**



Member of Executive Council
for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE

SPEECH OF THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MS. NTOMBIZANELE SIFUBA, ON THE TABLING OF THE BUDGET VOTE – 12 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, 6 JUNE 2025, BLOEMFONTEIN.

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Premier

Colleagues in the Executive Council

Honourable Deputy Speaker

Honourable Chair of Chairs

Honourable Chief Whip

Honourable Deputy Chief Whip

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councilors present

Representatives of the House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders

Representatives of the Free State Sport Confederation, Sport Federations as well as the Heritage, Arts and Culture Councils

Management and Officials of the Department

Baahi ba Freistata

Bomme le Bontate

Comrades

The question about the role of Sport, Arts and Culture in the broader national discourse and landscape of our country has been interrogated and ventilated for quite some time. Our post-apartheid democratic Constitution as well as



the National Development Plan have crystally pronounced the centrality of the role that sport, arts and culture plays in the advancement and development of our society. The current emerging challenges, within our nation state and within the global arena, have yet again catapulted into the public arena the need to revisit this question. The question of **nation-building and social cohesion** as central pillars for societal development have come back to confront us.

Honourable Speaker, we present this budget vote, Vote 12 of the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation at the time when the national question debate has been heightened by developments both in our country and the world. The unity and cohesion of our nation-state is under scrutiny and is being challenged by these developments. As the world is engulfed by concerns about economic development and growth, in view of the tariff wars that have been unleashed, and with what we consider to be key priorities in addressing the economic imperatives of our time, the role of nation-building and social cohesion tends to take a back seat. As we table this budget vote we will however, argue that that approach is wrong.

In addressing the centrality of nation-building and social question in societal development, **Joseph Stiglitz** in his seminal study entitled “Globalisation and Discontents”, strongly argues that without social cohesion and nation building, there cannot be economic progress and prosperity. In a situation of conflicts, wars, violence and disunity there cannot be economic investments by corporates and states.

Honourable Speaker, a case has been made for sport in particular by our late former President, **President Mandela**, when he asserted that, and I quote, “sport



has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does”, close quote.

Sport, arts and culture, therefore, serves as a powerful antidote to an environment which is characterised by disunity and lack of social cohesion. Sport is a tool for the enhancement of national unity.

The clarion call for national unity and social cohesion has also been forshadowed by **the Freedom Charter**, a prelude to our post-apartheid Constitution and Bill of Rights, whose seventieth anniversary we are celebrating this year. As the crafters of the Freedom Charter asserted the injunction for the opening of the doors of learning and culture, in their own wisdom were cognizant of the pivotal role of national consciousness that could be achieved only through cohesion and unity as facilitated by learning and culture. This month we pay homage to the youth who sacrificed their all to contribute to the freedom that we are enjoying today. The 2025 Youth month is celebrated under the theme “Skills for the changing world – Empowering youth for meaningful economic participation”. As we confront the current challenges that are thrown at us by the national and global currents, we need to take our minds back to those forebearers who gathered in Kliptown in 1955 and be guided by their wisdom. It is against this backdrop that we table this budget vote of the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation. We would also in this context like to bestow our gratitude to the late stalwart of the liberation struggle who has just passed on, Me Gertrude Shope. We thank her for the pivotal role that she has played in our liberation that we are enjoying today.

The social-cohesion and nation building mandate is achieved through both the programmes of Sport and Recreation as well as Cultural Affairs. It will therefore be befitting to honour our legends in the two sectors. This exercise will be undertaken this year.



2025/2026 Budget Allocation

Honourable Speaker, for the 2025/2026 Financial Year, the department receives a total budget allocation of **R666 075 000 (Six hundred and sixty-six million, seventy-five thousand rands)**.



Programme 1: Administration and Financial Management

Honourable Speaker, the Administration and Financial Management programme is allocated an amount of **R118 276 000 (Hundred and eighteen million, two hundred and seventy-six thousand rands)** for the 2025/2025 Financial Year.

Through Programme 1 interventions we have continued on a mission of contributing towards the realisation of a capable, ethical and developmental state, as well as the imperatives. Although the road towards the realisation of this vision has been rocky due to the tight fiscal environment, the Department has made headways.

The **filling of critical vacancies** remains a challenge, but we are happy to announce that the critical vacancy of a Chief Financial Officer has finally been filled. During this MTEF period we intend to fill the positions of Director for Human Resource Management; Manager for Internal Control at Finance; Director for Heritage, Museums and Language Services, as well as Manager for Occupational, Health and Safety Specialist at Infrastructure Unit. The vacancy



of Assistant Director: Performance and I.T Audit has been identified as a critical vacancy that is needed to enhance the capacity of our Internal Audit Unit.

Training and development interventions have also continued to be implemented with the strategic objective of ensuring the availability of the much-needed skills and expertise. These interventions also provide growth and career opportunities to individuals in and outside the Department. Towards that goal, **17** Cathsseta internships were provided, giving opportunities to young people to train in the Department since November 2024. **29** bursaries were awarded to officials of the Department to enhance their skills. In 2025/2026 we will continue with these interventions. We plan to appoint **20** interns from the **1%** skills levy.

We will also forge ahead with the appointment of the **140 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)** field workers through the Arts and Culture EPWP programme. As in the previous Financial Years these workers will be placed in all the districts for a period of 12 months under the Arts and Culture directorate.

Honorable Speaker, as we have reported before, **budget constraints** remain a factor in the Department's ability to fully carry out its mandate of social cohesion and nation-building to the fullest. Of the total budget of **R666 075.00 (Six hundred and sixty-six million, seventy-five thousand rands)** allocated to the department, only **36.2%** of the budget is dedicated to service delivery programmes, while the remainder covers compensation of employees. Dependence on Conditional Grants, again as we reported previously, remains a risk factor.





Programme 2: Cultural Affairs

Honourable Speaker, the Cultural Affairs programme (Programme 2) is allocated a budget of **R143 038 000 (One hundred and forty-three million, thirty-eight thousand)** in the 2025/2026 Financial Year.

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano, ha re teka ditekanyetso tsena, re rata ho nka monyetla ona ho lebisa tlotla le tlhompho ho e mong wa dibapadi tsa rona tsa sefalaneng, Ntate Pesa Pheko, ya ileng a bolawa ka sehloho. Setopo sa hae se ile sa fumanwa ke mapolesa kamora nako e telele ya ho nyamela hahae. Ntate Pheko e ne e le e mong wa dikwakwariri dipapading tsa sefalaneng, mme a hlahelletse ka mahetla ho tsona. Re le Lefapha, re sebetsa mmoho le bohle bangkakarolo ditabeng tsa dipapadi tsa sefalaneng, mme re tla etsa bonnete ba hore lebitso la hae le tswelapele ho tuma ho ya ho ile. Re tla tswelapele ka ho tshehetsa le ho ntshetsa pele dibapadi tsa sefalaneng tsa lapeng, e le hona ho tlotla le ho tumisa lebitso la Ntate Pheko. Ha moya wa hae o robale ka kgotso mme le toka e phethahale.

Honourable Speaker, the current global economic and political environment is likely to have a negative impact on our own national fiscus. This state also has the propensity to affect us from carrying out our mandate of **social cohesion and nation-building**.



It is perhaps then essential that we should invoke African intellectuals such as Ngugi wa Thiongo, who has just recently passed-on on the 28th of May 2025. Time and space will come when we will pay a befitting tribute to this African intellectual whose recent passing-on has reverberated around the world like a baobab tree falling with thunder in the forest! Ngugi wa Thiongo addressed the issue of **African cultural sovereignty and heritage** in his literary life works, most particularly so in his seminal literary work entitled "Decolonising the Mind - The Politics of Language in African Literature". In this classical work, Wa Thiongo argues that, and I quote, "The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their language, in the environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves", close quote.

Through cultural affairs programme we would want to be more deliberate and intentional in our quest to re-awaken the African spirit through promoting indigenous local knowledge systems as we fend off what Wa Thiongo refers to as "the cultural bomb". Theatre, literature and fiction that he asserts to be the vehicle of knowledge and development, as well as cultural heritage, have continued to receive prominence in our province. However, we will be the first to acknowledge that we need to be more deliberate, intentional and escalate our interventions in this space.

In the 2025/2026 and the MTEF period, we will continue to advance and build on the following achievements of the previous years:

In line with the **heritage landscape transformation** objective, we have taken the following concrete steps:



- On the 18th of March 2025 the public hearings on **South African Geographical Names Council Bill** reviews were held in our province in partnership with the Geographical Names Changes Council and the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. This review process will now intensify and ensure the conscious interventions in the naming and renaming of our geographical landmarks and public spaces.
- **The Geographical Names Changes** process for the renaming of Sand du Plessis Street in Odendaalsrus to Sipho Mutsi and R26 Road to Andrew Mlangeni in Bethlehem is underway. This process will be finalized this year.
- The South African Heritage Resources Authority conducted a competency assessment of **Provincial Heritage Resources Authority** in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act No: 25 of 1999 and provincial Authority was found to be competent to execute its duties and to ensure compliance of the heritage resources management legislation. We will in this Financial Year intensify our support to this structure to ensure that it carries out its mandate of transforming our heritage landscape to its fullest.
- The Department has been part of the process of **renovation of Winnie Mandela Museum** in Winnie Mandela town. Working together with the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture the project to renovate Winnie Mandela Museum continues.

Furthermore, **32 outreach programs** that reached women, youth and the disabled people in a quest to entrench the understanding of the importance of our museums and heritage were rolled out. **70%** of attendees at our outreach programmes were females, mostly in the rural areas of our province. We will continue to work hard to escalate this participation rate amongst our communities.



In order to promote our **National Symbols, patriotism, and Nation-building**, during the outreach programs, a total number of **15 000** brochures were distributed comprising of National Symbols and Orders; South African National Anthem; African Union Anthem; Desk National Flags; Pre-Amble of the Constitution; and Museums brochures. More work will be done to create awareness of our national identity and symbols in our communities. Our national unity and cohesion are at stake, and we need to be combative in its defense.

Amongst other milestones the Department recorded in the Museum and Heritage space are the following:

- The Department formed part of the coordinating team for the **repatriation and reburial project** which was led by the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. The two families of the departed exiled military veterans, Mr. Johannes Tau Tau and Mr. Ishmael Leoatle have respectively traveled to Lusaka, Zambia on 29 August 2024 and to Livingstone, Zambia on the 07 September 2024 for preparation of the repatriation of the mortal remains of their family members. The Homecoming ceremony for these two martyrs was held at Freedom Park from the 26th to the 27th of September 2024. The programme was addressed by President Cyril Ramaphosa. The Department is currently in the process of coordinating the process of establishing a Provincial task Team to facilitate the Provincial Home coming ceremony to be undertaken in the current financial year 2025/26.
- Mokete wa Letsatsi la Botjhaba o ketekilwe lebaleng la dipapadi la motseng wa Meqheleng/Ficksburg, ka la 24 Lwetse ka selemo sa 2024. Mokete ona wa Letsatsi la Botjhaba o ne o etelletwe pele ke Motlatsa-Presidente, Mohlomhpehi Paul Mashatile, mme baahi ba fetang dikete tse tshelela (**6000**) ba bile teng Mocketeng ona. Re tla boela re keteka



Letsatsi la Botjhaba hona Motseng oo wa Meqheleng/Ficksburg ka kgwedi ya Lwetse selemong sena.

- A **community conversation and sites excursion** were held in Bloemfontein on 17 October 2024 in collaboration with the Department of Education. The programme was held for learners from across the province and these are learners specifically involved in Values in Education programmes. This programme will continue to be implemented this year as part of the quest to imbue heritage knowledge amongst our learners.
- We further hosted the **South African Museums Association National Conference** from the 03-05 September 2024. The conference was attended by more than **80** Museum practitioners from across the country.
- A concerted intervention has been made to incorporate people with disabilities into our Heritage Museum and Language Services programmes. From the 12th until the 14th of December 2024 **an annual disability programme** was held together with over **600** people living with disabilities.

Honourable Speaker, as part of the infrastructure revitalisation programme, and to advance the heritage transformation landscape in our province while celebrating our cultural heritage, the **Waihoek Wesleyan School Church**, which as we know by now was declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, will be upgraded with new exhibitions through the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. Similarly, the resistance and liberation struggle women who were incarcerated at **Bhizah Makhathe** Prison will be memorialised through the building of a memorial wall in Kroonstad. This institution is also part of the Liberation Heritage Route.



The tourism impact of our museum and heritage services is underscored by the fact that our museums still attract a high number of visitors. To date the number of people who visited museums in 2024/25 is **28 817 (Twenty-eight thousand, eight hundred and seventeen)**. Museums, include Basotho Cultural Village, to attract tourists from within and outside the borders of our province and country.

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano, ka yuniti ya lefapha ya Ditshebeletso tsa Puo, re finne seledu, ra ntshetsa pele thomo ya kgodiso ya dipuo ka hare ho provensi ya rona. Sena re se etsa re ikamahantse le Molao wa Tshebediso ya Dipuo wa Freistata (*the Use of Free State Languages Act*). Lefapha le se le kgonne ho fihlella tse latelang ntshetsong pele ya thomo ena:

- To advance literature, reading and writing amongst young people in general and learners in particular, a **creative writing workshop** was conducted for **50** learners who are budding authors at Marallaneng Secondary School in Ficksburg.
- The Department hosted the **General Terminology and Orthography collaboration session** in Qwa Qwa on the 26 September 2024.
- **International Translation Day** was celebrated in Bloemfontein on 03 October 2024.
- Furthermore, a book launch for the **Covid 19 terms** was conducted on the 27 November 2024 as part of terminology development interventions, and a General Terminology and Orthography collaboration session which was held in QwaQwa on the 26 September 2024.
- The celebration of **KPD Maphalla** literary works was held in Bethlehem on 07 March 2025. KPD Maphalla is one of our foremost literary giants in the Sesotho literature field. We will continue to celebrate him on an annual basis, including this year.



Honourable Speaker, in order to continue to consolidate and advance our mandate around language transformation we will during the MTEF period construct **the Sesotho Literature Museum**. Currently, the museum is housed within the National Afrikaans Literature Museum building. This arrangement does not augur well for a language that is the most spoken language in the province. We therefore need to ensure that we accord respect and dignity to the Sesotho language by having a proper literature museum that preserves and promotes Sesotho literature. The upgrading and maintenance of the **National Afrikaans Literature Museum** will also take place this Financial Year.

To assist the Free State Provincial Government departments to implement the Use of Free State Official Languages Act we will ensure continuity of an **Interdepartmental Language Forum** to promote the coordination, cooperation and consultation between Departments and provincial entities. We will this year, also, commence with activities leading towards the **review of the Free State Government Provincial Language Policy**. Awareness around the Use of Free State Official Languages Act, Free State Provincial Government Language Policy and the South African Sign Language Act was rolled out to Language practitioners at the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus, on 13 March 2025.

Honourable Speaker, in terms of **Arts and Culture programmes** implemented in the last Financial Year, our local artists have benefited from the following programmes, amongst others:

- Free State Community Arts Centres Development Programme
- Free State Clap and Tap Choirs Competition
- EPWP Arts and Culture Programme
- DSACR Visual Arts programme



- Mangaung String Programme
- The following Arts and Culture District Festivals were also hosted: Ulutsha Theatre and Dance Festival in Kwakwatsi/Koppies, from 01 to 05 August 2024; Serumula Youth Arts Festival in Paul Roux, from 20 to 27 October 2024; Gospel Music Competition in Thabong/Welkom, on 23 November 2024; Menyabuketso Heritage Development Programme, in Phuthaditjhaba, from 20 to 23 March 2025; Folkloric Festival in Thaba Nchu, from 21 to 22 March 2025; and Xhariep District Arts Festival in Jacobsdal, from 22 to 23 March 2025.

The **Free State Homebrew Festival** is one of our flagship programmes. The festival was staged from 20 to 23 February 2025. Homebrew showcases the best developing / promising artists as well as semi-professional Free State talent. During that festival, a total number of **210** artists participated in this programme. **60** temporary job opportunities were also created.

Honourable Speaker, in the 2025/2026 Financial Year the above programmes will continue to be rolled out at a greater momentum. Through our music institution of **MUSICON** we will this year implement music training programmes from 11 to 12 July, Solo Singing competitions from 22 to 23 August as well as stage the Mid-Year Concert from 26 to 27 July. **Visual Arts and Crafts Programme**, will be implemented in Fezile Dabi District, Lejweleputswa District, Thabo Mofutsanyana District during the Financial Year.

We celebrated Freedom Day in the province which took services to the people in Ward 17 in Mangaung as led by the Office of the Premier. The 2025 **Heritage Day celebration** will be hosted in Ficksburg/Meqheleng. Basotho New Year as a provincial celebration of the Basotho heritage will also continue to be embraced.



We will further implement the following Arts and Culture projects in the 2025/2026 Financial Year:

- Battle of Municipalities Talent Search programme
- Homebrew programme in Bloemfontein
- Clap and Tap festival.
- Legends Awards.

Honourable Speaker, as the honourable Premier pronounced during the 2025 State of the Province Address, the **Mangaung African Cultural Festival** (MACUFE) will be implemented in collaboration with the private sector. The importance of this festival in our cultural and tourism landscape has been underscored by many people.

During the last Financial Year, we partnered with and supported several **independent arts and culture organisations, programmes and festivals**. We will this Financial Year continue to support various awards that recognize the artists in various genres in our province.

In partnership with the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture as well as the National Film and Video Foundation the **Free State Film Studio** will also be constructed in Bloemfontein during this period. The work towards the establishment of the Film hub project has started. The film industry has demonstrably proved itself as one of the major contributors to economic growth and development. We will therefore prioritize this intervention. The upgrading and maintenance of **Mmabana Arts and Culture Centre** as well as the **National Afrikaans Literature Museum** will take place this Financial Year.





Programme 3: Library and Archive Services

Honourable Speaker, the Library and Archives programme is allocated a budget of **R251 314 000 (Two hundred and fifty-one million, three hundred and fourteen thousand rands)** in the 2025/2026 Financial Year. 75% of the budget of this programme is Conditional Grant from National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

The Freedom Charter's clarion call for the opening of the doors of learning and culture receives a resounding expression through the Library and Archive Services programme. Through this programme, we have continued to provide educational opportunities and research resources to learners and the broader communities of the Free State. Access to reading materials, physically and digitally, continued to be provided uninterruptedly. The following outcomes and impacts underpin the interventions that the Department has made in this regard:

- **The RE JA BUKA Reading Festival** was successfully implemented from May to September 2024. Through this festival the visually impaired reading skills were showcased and young adults also tested their skills in public speaking. Prizes were awarded to participants in positions 1, 2 and 3. In 2025 the programme will be implemented with the inclusion of virtual programmes to support digital transformation plans. **R 2.098 million (Two million and ninety-eight thousand rands)** will be allocated towards the project for the 2025/26 Financial Year.



- **Support for Black, Youth and Women Authors:** While the budget for procurement of library material has been reduced, local authors and women book suppliers will continue be supported with about 20% of the budget. In 2024/25 financial year **R 2 058 863 million (Two million, fifty-eight thousand, eight hundred and sixty-three rands)** was spent towards women, youth and local authors. **R2.8 million** will be allocated towards library material for 2025/26 financial year.
- **Technological advances:** Internet connectivity is already provided to **170** libraries. However, the Department seeks to enhance connectivity in libraries with regards to Wi-fi and broadband. The Department is working towards ensuring that all libraries are able to provide Wi-fi to the local communities. **R 7.7 million** will be allocated towards connectivity in libraries in the 2025/26 financial year. Plans are also in place to replenish computer hardware in libraries. **R1.8 million** will be allocated for procurement of computer hardware for libraries in the 2025/26 financial year.
- **Services for the visually impaired:** **R 1.5 million** will be transferred to the South African Library for the Blind to maintain, manage and monitor the 30 mini-libraries established within some libraries. These mini-libraries will be used for developing audio books in indigenous languages for the visually impaired. The South African Library for the Blind is in the process of appointing two (2) narrators from the Free State on a three (3) year contract. Payment of the salaries will be handled by the South African Library for the Blind. The South African Library for the Blind has also donated one narration studio which is worth **R441 772 (Four hundred and forty-one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-two rands)**. There is an undertaking to donate a second studio towards the end of the year 2025.
- A **newly built library Qibing/Wepener** will be officially opened and handed over to community in July 2025. This library is yet another rollout of the much-needed infrastructure service that benefits our communities.





Programme 4: Sport and Recreation:

Honourable Speaker, the Sport and Recreation programme is allocated a budget of **R153 447 000 (One hundred and fifty-three million, four hundred and forty-seven thousand rands)** in the 2025/2026 Financial Year. As we outline the milestones of the last Financial Year in terms of the implementation of our programmes, we would particularly like to dedicate this section of the speech to our athletes who have continued to place the Free State on the map and also capably flew the flag of our country in continental and international sport competitions throughout the years, and in the last Financial Year more specifically. These athletes are too numerous to acknowledge and celebrate by name.

In the last Budget Vote speech, we reported about what we termed the positive “rekindling and rejuvenation” of the sport and recreation environment in our province since the onset of the seventh administration. This spirit of rekindling and rejuvenation was in the context of the **hosting of major national and international sporting events** in our province, such as the Bafana Bafana’s FIFA World Cup qualification matches as well as the International Rugby Test match between South African National Rugby Team and Portugal. We are happy to announce that, since then, the trajectory of sport development in our province has reached a crescendo in its upward trend.



Currently the province is hosting the **Confederation of Southern Africa Football Association Cup (COSAFA)**. The games have already started on the 4th June and 13 countries are participating in the tournament. The following legacy projects will benefit the province: Under-15 boys and girls programme conducted by Mark Fish; Medical Workshop for local ABC Motsepe clubs; Internship programme in media to benefit five (5) interns as well as another four (4) in marketing at CUT. sport administration workshops will also be conducted. Medical students from the University of the Free State will work with dedicated doctors who will provide medical services during the games. 40 learners have been identified from the schools around Mangaung to serve as ball retrievers.

On the 5th September the province will further host **the Bafana Bafana FIFA World Cup qualifier game** against Lesotho and on the 9th September, Bafana Bafana will again battle it out against Nigeria in our province for the same FIFA World Cup qualifiers tournament. The staging of all these international and continental sport tournaments is indeed a strong and clear manifestation of the ground we have prepared for our province to be the sport mecca.

Honourable Speaker, this Financial Year also started on a very positive note as the province hosted two important national Sport Championships. From the 2nd to 5th of April 2025 the province hosted the **American Express National Tennis Junior Championships** in Bloemfontein. From the 2nd to the 7th of April 2025, we simultaneously hosted the **Autumn National Schools Mainstream and LSEN Championships** for both swimming and athletics. Guided by the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by the



two Departments at national level, the Autumn National Schools Mainstream and LSEN Championships were staged under a very strong and formidable partnership between our department, the Free State Department of Education, the national departments of Sport, Arts and Culture as well as Basic Education. More than **2000 learners**, representing the diversity of our country in terms of race, gender as well as disability, took part in these Championships. The Free State achieved the bronze medal position in Athletics and 4th position in Swimming.

Honourable Speaker, as part of the quest to engender a positive sporting environment, and to ensure that sport thrives as part of the broader objective of enhancing social cohesion and nation building, school sport has become paramount. The Autumn National Schools Championships that we have just hosted as the province are a culmination of an enduring effort by our department and the Department of Education to ensure that sport becomes a prominent feature of school environment.

Guided by the **National Sport and Recreation Plan of 2011** as well as the **White Paper on Sport and Recreation of 2013**, we have consequently achieved the following outcomes through School Sport in the last Financial Year:

- **130** schools were provided with **Sport Equipment and Attire**. The majority of these schools are quintile 1 to quintile 3 schools in all districts of the province. The aim is to encourage participation in all areas especially township and rural areas. In 2025/2026 we will provide 180 schools with sport equipment and attire.



- **300 educators and sport volunteers** were trained in various coaching, umpiring, refereeing and administrative qualifications
- **545** learners were supported to participate in **various National School Sport Championships**. In 2025/2026, **360** learners will be supported to participate in the Championships.

Our efforts at entrenching **School Sport** have born fruits and have been demonstrated through the excellent performance of our athletes in school sport competitions. Our resolve to improving regular participation of schools in sport at the lower and grassroots levels has thus borne fruits. This regular participation is in the form of inter-school activities, leagues, festivals, inter-school matches and displays or performances.

Honourable Speaker, before learners are members of a school community they are primarily, first and foremost members of a broader community within which the school is located. In our endeavour to ensure the massification of sport we, therefore, also ensure that **Community Sport** thrives and is on the ascendance.

Honourable Speaker, some of the milestones in terms of platforms provided for our athletes at community sport level include the following:

- The **Provincial Youth Day Games** were successfully held in Makgolokweng Village in QwaQwa on 16 June 2024. Over **1000** participants took part in Soccer, Netball, Athletics and Indigenous Games. These games will again be staged this year in line with the June Month programme.
- The **Provincial Indigenous Games** were hosted for two (2) days in Bloemfontein from 25 to 26 September 2024. These games are an



annual event and will therefore continue this year.

- **O.R Tambo Games** were staged in Welkom from 26 to 27 October 2024. We will continue hosting the O.R Tambo Games in October to coincide with the birthday month of our liberation struggle icon, Tata Oliver Reginald Tambo.
- On 2 October 2024, the **Provincial Golden Games** which caters for senior citizens were held at the Doctor Rantlai Molemela stadium in collaboration with the Department of Social Development. Our Free State Golden Games team participated in the National Golden Games Championships in Rustenburg from 17 to 20 February 2025. The Provincial Golden Games will again be supported in October this year.
- **Sport Equipment and Attire** were handed over to the community sport hubs during the hosting of the Provincial Indigenous Games on 26 September 2024. Notwithstanding the challenges with budget for this mandate, the Department will forge ahead with providing equipment and attire to community sport clubs so as to encourage sport participation. In 2025/2026 we will continue to provide **six (6)** sport hubs and **150** clubs with sport attire and equipment.
- The **Nelson Mandela Challenge** was hosted successfully, with five districts competing against each other in Zastron in July 2024. This is an annual event which we will continue to host during Mandela month celebration.
- We further provided sponsorship to the Netball Federation to participate at the **Spar Championships** in Johannesburg from the 1st to 17th of December 2024.

Just like at School Sport level, we have also witnessed the remarkable performance of athletes from our local communities who participated at



various national and international competitions. We have been made proud by these athletes.

On the 21st September 2024, we staged the **Free State Sport Awards** during which we found it befitting to pay tribute to and honour our athletes. Their excellent performance at various provincial, national, continental and international sport competitions has served as a clear exhibition of the sporting talent that the Free State possesses. We will this year host the **Sport, Arts and Culture Awards**.

Honourable Speaker, **Sport Science and High-Performance Services** provided through the Free State Sport Science Institute and the Free State Sport Confederation, serves as the pinnacle of our Sport development Continuum model. It is here where athletes that were identified and selected at lower level of mass participation, and the intermediary stage of competition, are further developed for elite sport participation. Moving forward the Academy will be incorporated into the Free State Sport Confederation.

During the previous Financial Year, the Free State Sport Science Institute rendered services across all the districts dependent on the athletes' level, available resources, and the capacity of our dedicated staff. The range of services offered include:

- **Eight (8) Specialized Sport Performance tests** for identified and registered Elite High-Performance Athletes at the FSSSI.
- **1 164 Sport-specific testing for provincial and national athletes,**



available at our provincial facility in Bloemfontein, and in districts such as Lejweleputswa, Fezile Dabi, and Thabo Mofutsanyana, including surrounding towns upon request.

- **16 113 Sport-specific conditioning sessions** provided at both provincial and district levels, with home training programmes also made available upon request.
- **270 Injury rehabilitation services** delivered by our single appointed Biokineticist based in Bloemfontein.
- **158 Nutritional interventions** managed by our sole Sport Nutritionist, also stationed at the provincial office.

The Institution remains committed to building a healthier, more competitive sporting future for all communities in our province.

Honourable Speaker, in order to continue to advance sport development in our province, the matter of sport facilities will be central. We need to create an enabling environment within our schools and in communities for athletes to be able to effectively hone their abilities and skills. To that effect, the Department will during the 2025/2026 Financial Year we will build **four (4) Combo courts facilities**. Two (2) courts will be built the Xhariep district and two (2) in Thabo Mofutsanyana district. These will be additional to the already exiting courts in other parts of the province. We appeal to municipalities to take care of these facilities as it is their mandate in terms of the Constitution.

We further undertake to continue with some of the following programmes in the 2025/2026 Financial year:



- Support to ABC Motsepe League
- Recreation programmes to promote healthy lifestyle
- Support to athletes and teams
- Support to Women Football
- Development of women boxing and hosting women's tournament

Conclusion:

Honourable Speaker, as I conclude, we need to continue to argue a case for a concerted investment in and capitalisation of sport, arts and culture interventions which are at the heart of social cohesion and nation building.

Yes, indeed our country is confronted by enormous socio-economic challenges, particularly in this global environment characterised by particular geo-political developments and economic trends. However, the socio-economic transformation of our society will not be complete with the mandate of sport, arts and culture lagging behind. Let us take lessons from the Chinese economic development and miracle which was predicated and predated by its cultural revolution. For us to realise the totality of development, which takes into account nation-states, cultural dynamics must be embraced.

Honourable Speaker, may I in conclusion take this moment to extend our fraternal gratitude to all our partners and stakeholders who continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with us as we steer this ship to the much-anticipated destination.

My thanks also go to the Head of the Department, management of the Department, and all the officials, including staff in my inner office, for continuing to roll up their sleeves whenever duty calls.



I further would like extend our appreciations to the honourable Premier, honourable Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae as well as colleagues in the Executive Council for the continued spirit of comradeship and collegiality in this quest for service to our people.

Let me also thank my organisation, the African National Congress, for trusting me with this responsibility that carries such a big mandate.

Lastly, but not least, I extend my appreciation to my family and friends for allowing me space and time to dedicate myself to the course of our people whose pressing needs are primary.

I thank you.

Malibongwe!!





Private Bag X20606,
Bloemfontein, 9300
Business Partners Building,
Cnr Henry and East Burger Streets,
Bloemfontein
Tel: (051) 410 4735
Fax: (051) 410 4786
Email: tankiso@sacr.fs.gov.za