



DEPARTMENTAL **BUDGET VOTES**

2025

VOTE 9

HON. D.K MANCE

**Public Works and
Infrastructure**



TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2025



**Fourth Raadsaal,
Bloemfontein**



10h00



**public works &
infrastructure**

Department of
Public Works & Infrastructure
FREE STATE PROVINCE



**A FREE STATE
THAT WORKS FOR ALL**



Department of Public Works and Infrastructure

2025/ 2026 Budget Vote 9 Speech

Tabled by MEC Dibolelo Mance, 17 JUNE 2025

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Legislature

Honourable Madam Premier

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Members of the Executive Council

Executive Mayors and Mayors Present

Councilors Present

Leaders of the Opposition Parties

Traditional Leaders Present

Director General and Heads of Departments

Our Strategic Partners

Our Invited Business People

Distinguished Guests

Comrades and Friends



Introduction

Honourable Speaker,

I greet you today on a very significant month in the history of South Africa. A month that we remember a gallant youth generation of 16 June 1976. A generation that will always be remembered in our authentic history books, as the youth that revolted against the racist apartheid colonialism.

Honorable Speaker, I must remind this house that, it is the youth who propelled the liberation movement in South Africa to engage in an arm struggle against the racist apartheid government. It is the students of SASO who kept the fighting spirit against apartheid when liberation movements were banned. The generation of 1976 have demonstrated that the youth can always play a turning point in our society. The youth of today should follow in the footsteps of the 1976 youth and become agents of change!

As we gather here today in this August house, it is with profound sense of duty and optimism that I present the budget vote for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for the 2025/2026 financial year. This budget is not merely a collection of numbers and charts, it is a declaration of our collective vision and commitment to the growth and development of our province.

In the face of global and domestic challenges, we focus on economic recovery, infrastructure development and substantial job creation. This budget vote sets the foundation for sustainable growth and service delivery, aiming to transform our society in a meaningful way. Our budget allocation reflects a strong commitment to government accountability and efficiency, ensuring alignment with national development goals and objectives.

Honourable Speaker, the Department's work is informed by the Seventh Administration priorities which found expression in the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP). The priorities are the following:

1. Drive inclusive growth and job creation.



2. Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.
3. Build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

The Department is contributing towards the attainment of all these priorities, with much more focus on priority number one which is inclusive growth and job creation. Whilst also integrating the Public Works sector priorities.

One of the critical questions this budget seeks to address is whether we are providing sufficient resources for job creation and maintenance of our government buildings. We are committed to ensure that, these initiatives are well funded and effectively implemented, and create real opportunities for our citizens.

As we reveal the financial roadmap for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, we do so with a clear understanding of our responsibility to set a trajectory for development that benefits all. The people of the Free State deserve a budget that prioritises their needs, focuses on sustainable development and eliminates inefficiencies. This is not just a financial plan, it is a political policy commitment to a brighter and better future for all.

Our pledge as political leaders is clear, every Rand allocated must serve the people of the Free State, driving tangible outcomes and breaking the cycle of empty promises. This budget is designed to rebuild public trust and demonstrate a genuine commitment to progress and social equity. We are inspired to continue delivering the benefits of political freedom to the people of our province by creating avenues for them to access economic freedom.

Honourable Speaker, the core areas of the Department include maintenance of government buildings, infrastructure development, property management and Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). These key programmes are at the center of the fight against the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.



Administration

Honourable Speaker,

The Department continues to strive towards further professionalization of its labour force as outlined in the Directives on Compulsory Training Programmes and Human Resource Management and Development for the Public Service.

During the 2024/2025 financial year, the Department prioritised the professional development of employees bearing in mind, that a competent well trained workforce is essential for achievement of departmental objectives. This includes continuous professional development for construction project managers, engineers, quantity surveyors, architects, works inspectors, tradesmen and those occupations tasked with good corporate governance, ensuring that they are equipped with the latest industry standards and best practices.

A recent Skills Audit conducted revealed targeted skills gaps within the building environment employees, particularly the works inspector and related cadre. A comprehensive programme that addresses those skills gaps and prepares participants for professional registration commenced during May 2025. This skills intervention will lay the foundation and contribute to enabling the 45 staff members to register at the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) as Certified / Professional Building Inspectors.

As committed during the budget vote for the 2024/2025 financial year, the Department invested R930 000 for staff on salary levels 2-5 to undergo the compulsory Ethics training which is one of the cornerstone skills development interventions aimed at contributing to an ethical and professional public service. 283 employees have completed this training, giving the Department 100% compliance. National School of Government have issued a certificate to the Department confirming this achievement.



During the 2025/26 financial year we will fill 30 key critical vacancies that will contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the department within our mandated functions. These posts cut across all three budget programmes and include relevant posts on senior management level, the professional and technical cadres, artisans, property management and supply chain management. Critical and key posts vacated during the course of the financial year will also receive attention. We furthermore aspire to increase our representation of persons with disabilities employees from 3.7% to 5% of the workforce.

Honourable Speaker, training and development of artisans is at the centre of our maintenance programme, through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program, facilitated by accredited training providers, the department has over the past three years successfully assisted 22 artisans in obtaining formal qualifications in critical trades, including: Plumbing, Painting, Bricklaying, Lift Mechanics, Plastering, Welding, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, Electrical Work, Fitting, and Carpentry. By equipping artisans with recognised credentials, we are enhancing job security, promoting entrepreneurship, and driving economic growth in our province.

In the 2025 academic year, we awarded 34 additional part-time bursaries to employees. This initiative is aligned with our commitment to enhance capacity building, foster employee up-skilling and drive improved organisational performance. Bursaries included 13 technical, of which 11 are artisans, 1 each in Quantity Surveying and Geo-Information Science and Technology, Supply Chain, Security and General Management.

On training and skills development, the Department facilitated more than twenty-four (24) different training interventions during which five hundred and sixty (560) permanent employees benefited. In line with our training priorities, a focused initiative was undertaken to upgrade skills levels of security officers at salary level 5 and above, 33 security supervisors obtained a Grade A Security Certificate as recognised by PSIRA.



For the 2025/2026 financial year, the Department will expand this initiative to encompass the remaining security personnel, further advancing their professional qualifications and skills.

The Department in collaboration with Aubrey Nyiko Business Enterprise and the BANK SETA, has partnered to facilitate a structured graduate internship programme for unemployed graduates. The initiative aims to support youth employability and skills development in alignment with national priorities. 36 interns funded by the BANK SETA in various disciplines inclusive of finance, cost and management accounting, information technology, communication, quantity surveying and mechanical engineering have been placed across key functions and in the regions. 16 key staff members including senior managers attended a course in mentoring and coaching during May 2025. They will mentor / coach these interns.

Also in 2025/2026 financial year, **Honourable Speaker**, we will appoint interns in the critical areas of architecture, civil, mechanical, electrical engineering, quantity surveying, project management and related professions.

Honourable Speaker

As we strive to build a capable, responsive, and people-centred public service, we must recognise the critical role of structured training pathways in transforming the lives of our citizens—particularly the youth. Our department acknowledges the strategic value that Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) offer in equipping our people with the skills necessary to actively participate in the economy and service delivery.

Our training portfolio includes critical development programmes such as:

- Internships for graduates seeking public sector experience.
- Learnerships aimed at combining theoretical education with practical workplace exposure.
- Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) skills interventions.
- Artisan development to strengthen our technical capacity in maintenance and infrastructure delivery.



These programmes are not merely compliance activities—they are transformational tools that unlock potential, restore dignity, and build economic inclusion. It also affirms our readiness to absorb and capacitate young people in meaningful ways. Building on this momentum, we aim to:

- Develop a formal partnership framework with PSETA and CETA, outlining mutual priorities and aligned projects.
- Submit demand-driven training proposals to SETAs for consideration in their discretionary grants windows.
- Create a SETA liaison desk within our Corporate Services Branch to coordinate all training-related partnerships.
- Map our departmental Annual Performance Plan (APP) and Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) to SETA funding instruments.
- Explore multi-year agreements to sustain training pipelines in high-demand areas, including ICT, legal services, construction management, and administration.

We believe these efforts will not only improve our internal capacity but also contribute to the broader developmental agenda of the province by increasing youth employability, promoting skills alignment, and advancing transformation.

Honourable Members, investing in our people is investing in the future of the province. We therefore commit to forging strong, outcomes-oriented relationships with SETAs to ensure that every opportunity to uplift, train, and employ is fully harnessed.

Public Works – Maintenance

Honourable Speaker, aligned with the overarching goals of the Medium Term Development Plan, the Department is committed to upholding the principles of inclusive development and improved service delivery. Maintenance plays a critical role in this effort, as it ensures the reliability of essential infrastructure for all citizens.



Through coordinated planning and execution, we aim to enhance service delivery conditions, stimulate economic growth, and foster a sense of community pride. Maintenance is key in improving the lifespan of infrastructure, with an emphasis on rehabilitating buildings that have deteriorated significantly. Day-to-day maintenance is still performed by departmental personnel.

Our commitment to infrastructure maintenance remains steadfast, focusing on projects exceeding R15m in value, underscoring our dedication to high-impact initiatives. The Department completed seven renewable energy/back-up systems in the 2024/2025 financial year. We are currently participating in the Integrated Resource Efficiency Programme (IREP) for government buildings, under the auspices of Strategic Integrated Project 28: PV and Water Savings on Government Buildings Programme, as included in Government Gazette No. 812 (Vol 661; July 24, 2020). The programme's objectives include the installation of solar photovoltaic plants (rooftop or other structures), renewable water heating solutions, and waste management. Due to budget constraints, the Department will focus on installing rooftop solar PV plants with backup batteries on two office buildings, implementing renewable energy solutions for water heating using heat pumps, and retrofitting old lights with energy-efficient LED lights.

The Shared Water Savings Project (SWSP) exemplifies our focus on sustainability and innovation. Currently implemented across nine properties—including seven hospitals, Government Garage, and Public Works offices in Hamilton.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has in collaboration with Motheo Construction Group, been able to reach an outstanding milestone of saving 7 billion litres of water in 5 years. The value of this water is equivalent to over R350m. Further to this, we are pioneering the water saving initiative even further by intending to supply our hospitals with borehole water that will be treated on an onsite filtration plant. This will relieve the strain on our water systems and enable areas that are in dire need of water to receive this essential resource. Every drop of water we save is water made available to those who need it.



During 2024/2025 financial year, the Department conducted 12 condition assessments as planned. In the 2025/2026 financial year, the Department plans to complete two maintenance projects (HVACs) for Fidel Castro and OR Tambo House. The Department concluded twelve (12) planned condition assessments in 2024/2025 financial year and twenty-seven (27) is planned for the 2025/2026 financial year based on identified, un used or dilapidated properties to determine their future utilisation.

The Free State Provincial Government has been allocated a significant donation of energy generation equipment from the People's Republic of China, as part of a Technical Assistance Programme initiated during the August 2023 state visit by President Xi Jinping to South Africa. This donation, secured under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, aims to address critical energy challenges within the province, especially in public facilities such as those in the Education, Health, and Social Development sectors.

Project Management Unit

Honourable Speaker,

The National Development Plan highlights the importance of infrastructure development as an enabler of socio-economic development. Infrastructure development in the province is contextualized in relation to and takes direction from the Free State Growth and Development Strategy and the Provincial Spatial Development Framework.

In carrying out our mandate of delivering socio-economic infrastructure projects on behalf of sister departments and of our own maintenance projects, the Department remains committed to complete key projects within the 2025/2026 financial year. As we reflect on our service also to the public, we draw inspiration from the words of Mahatma Gandhi: **“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”**. With this in mind, I now present the projects we aim to accomplish.



Katlego Mpumelelo Secondary School in Amelia, Sasolburg, will be completed and handed over in the current financial year, **2025/2026**. The project is currently at 94% completion with the school Hall the only facility outstanding. **Leboneng Special School Hostel** in Thabong, Welkom. This school hostel is designed to accommodate 300 school children, 150 Boys and 150 Girls. It is currently at 97% progress with the Dining Hall, Kitchen and Laundry being finalized. **Thusanong Building** in Mangaung which is going to house the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs once it is completed, is currently at 72% completion. Our Traditional Leaders will be housed in this state of the art building which was once exposed to vandalism.

The Department has completed and handed over the second phase of the Tshireletsong Children's Home Centre to the Department of Social Development, thereby bringing services closer to the community. This phase of the project includes the integration of energy-saving solar panels, which are designed to significantly lower electricity consumption.

The newly refurbished facility now features modern office spaces, consultation rooms, and recreational areas all aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and improving community well-being. Additionally, by relocating Social Development operations to a state-owned property not only reduces the government's extensive leasing cost but also boosts economic growth through more effective use of existing assets. This strategic move highlights a commitment to sustainable development and resource optimization, ensuring that government resources are utilised in the most efficient manner possible. Furthermore, Eureka School Hostel has also been handed over to the Department of Education. Qibing Library in Wepenaar is completed and is yet to be handed over to the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (SACR).

Honourable Speaker, on the 10th of April, I had the privilege of conducting an oversight visit to the Oranjekrag School Hostel in Xhariep. I am pleased to report that the construction of the school has been successfully completed.



Honourable Speaker,

The following infrastructure projects are still under construction and will be completed in 2025/2026 financial year: **Breda Farm School Hostel** designed to house 200 Girls and 200 Boys from the farming communities around the Dihlabeng Local Municipality. It is currently at 87% complete. **Boitumelong Special School Hostel** in Thaba Nchu is designed to accommodate 200 children, 100 Boys and 100 Girls with different learning disabilities. It is currently at 40% complete. **Morena Tshohisi Primary School** in Makgolokweng, Harrismith, is to accommodate 1000 learners and currently at 45% completion. Most of this school's facilities have been subcontracted to local SMMEs, and mostly women contractors. **Trompsburg Special School Hostel** is to accommodate 200 disabled children from all corners of the Xhariep District Municipality. It is currently at 35% complete. **Trompsburg Special School** will accommodate 1000 children from the Xhariep District Municipality. The school will have facilities such as Autism Classes and different trades' workshops to equip the learners with handy skills. **Father Balink Primary School** in Parys is at 87% complete. It is to replace the current prefabricated structures where the learners are accommodated.

Thandanani Clinic in Thabong Welkom is at 85% completion. It will relieve the other clinics within its vicinity as it is in a newly developed area. **Rheederpark Clinic** in Welkom is at 85% completion. It is envisaged to alleviate the pressure on the smaller clinic in this part of town. There is a growing community in the area and this clinic could not have come at a better time. **Boitumelo Hospital** in Kroonstad has been in construction for over a decade, having gone through the hands of different contractors and none of whom were able complete it. It is currently at 35% completion.

We initially intended to complete all these projects within the 2024/2025 financial year. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the project's completion has been rescheduled to the 2025/2026 financial year. We remain committed to delivering



these projects and ensuring successful completion. We plan to undertake forensic investigations on Tshehetso Primary School in Bothaville, a project that has been halted due to numerous challenges. The intention is to uphold accountability and ensure value for money, as well as putting control on the processes.

Property Management

Honourable Speaker

We stated in this August house last year during the Department's budget vote that we place property transformation high on our agenda. We will and are determined as part of socio-economic transformation to transform the property industry, yet challenges on this front continue.

The Department plays a central role of promoting transformation in the property industry which is by far dominated by Previously Advantaged Individuals. The Department has paid a total amount of R340 433 444m for office accommodation as at end of March 2025.

The Department currently has fifty-four (54) leases for office accommodation of which thirty-nine (39) contracts are with Previously Disadvantaged Individuals (HDIs) which translates to 72.22% (R261 803m), five (5) contracts are with Government entities which translates to 9.26% (R51 578m) and ten (10) contracts are with Previously Advantaged Individuals which translates to 18.52% (R26 962m).

The Department has fulfilled the commitment made regarding the advertisement of six (6) office accommodation needs and anticipates advertising the additional seven (7) during the 2025/2026 financial year.

Honourable Speaker

The Department is on an upward trajectory in its quest to move from privately owned buildings to state owned buildings. The Department has repurposed and refurbished seventeen (17) buildings for office accommodation in the past five years, this was in



an attempt to reduce payment of operating leases. Furthermore, the Department has identified and budgeted for the refurbishment of five (5) state owned buildings during the MTEF period, this includes conversion of Bothobapelo School in Botshabelo to be used as office accommodation. This is the quest of the Department to move from privately owned properties to state owned.

Additionally, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure will be providing Strydom House to the Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation for the purpose of establishing a film studio in the Free State Province.

Honourable Speaker

As the sole custodian of provincially owned properties, the Department has a mandate to maintain this property portfolio as it contributes towards the investment value and revenue potential of the Province. There are currently 4889 properties recorded in the Immovable Asset Register with a value of R12 500 billion. The Immovable Asset Register complies with the minimum requirements of an Immovable Asset Register and physical verifications are done continuously to ensure that the information captured in the Immovable Asser Register is credible. Reconciliations are also done on an annual basis with the Deeds Office`s Database to ensure the completeness of the asset register which is obtained through the facilitation of the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Honourable Speaker

We hosted Property Management roadshows across all five districts in November and December 2024. The following stakeholders were part of the roadshows: Department of Social Development; Agriculture and Rural Development; Free State Development Corporation (FDC); DESTEA and Independent Development Trust (IDT). The primary goal of the roadshows was to showcase the Immovable Asset portfolio managed by the Department, as well as to highlight the twenty-nine (29) unused or dilapidated properties to be advertised through competitive bidding process where interested bidders will be able to provide proposals on the best use of these properties in their current condition (voetstoots). The advert for unused/



dilapidated properties will be published during the 2025/2026 financial year. The valuable impact of this initiative will yield minimise vandalism in state-owned properties, improved and enhanced local economic growth through generating revenue for the Free State Province.

The Department still has plans to adopt various models such as Build – Operate – Transfer (BOT) and Refurbish - Operate –Transfer (ROT), and the models will be tested in properties such as the Nurses Home in Pelonomi Hospital and Kopano Complex in Welkom, Voortrekker Hospital in Kroonstad and Ramkraal in Bloemfontein. Inclusive to the buildings are state land that will also be identified and released for development purposes.

Honourable Speaker

The Department anticipates convening a Property Investment Summit engagement where the Minister and Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, property experts, Infrastructure SA, landlords, and other stakeholders will be in attendance. This summit is envisaged to provide ideas for finding solutions to use the redundant properties. The event will be hosted during October 2025.

The ownership of Naledi Sun in Thaba Nchu has been transferred to the Free State Provincial Government by the Department of Rural Development. The use of this property and other earmarked properties, will be geared towards contributing to the economic development of this economically depressed area.

The Department is in the process of identifying pieces of land that can be utilised by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the development of small-scale farmers, with much more focus on the youth.

The Department is concerned about the increasing incidents of theft and vandalism of public infrastructure. We have invested in CCTV cameras and other electronic measures to curb this challenge.



As approved by the Executive Council (EXCO) on 30 April 2025, a total of eight hundred and eighty-one properties (881) have been identified to undergo the disposal processes in Extension 26, known as Phase 6, in Bloemfontein. Phase 1 will be focusing on the disposal of one hundred and sixty-eight (168) self-built structures/houses; that is: ninety-eight (98) of the structures will be disposed of through donation to pensioners, unemployed and child-headed families. The other seventy (70) will be disposed of through sale to employed and self-employed individuals. The remaining ones will also be attended to in phases.

Honourable Speaker, as part of empowering communities in Thaba Nchu and Heidedal Extension 25 and 26 with decent residential accommodation, the Department has appointed a panel of conveyancers over a period 36 months to fast track the registration process.

Honourable Speaker

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is organising information sessions on the Land Expropriation Act 13 of 2024. This is informed by the fact that our Department is the custodian of this Act. The purpose of the information session is to inform communities about the contents and implications of the Act, while we await the formal framework to enable this process.

Honourable Speaker

The Department receives insufficient allocation to cover property rates and municipal services and continuously spends 100% of its allocated budget. The original budget has always been supplemented and increased during the adjustment budget processes to ensure continued payment of property rates and municipal services to municipalities and other Service Providers.

The budget for property rates in the 2025/2026 financial year is sufficient to process payments for the current accounts. It's rather unfortunate that the budget for municipal services is inadequate to pay all municipalities which has a negative effect on service delivery to municipalities. The current allocation covers a minimum of two



(2) to five (5) months of the financial year for the medium to large municipalities. As the Department we rely on the adjustment budget process for additional allocation. The process to request additional funding at different fora will continue. Interventions are also in place to reduce the debt owed to municipalities.

In assisting municipalities to sustain service delivery, a total amount of R 537,805m (99.98%) has been paid for municipal services and R 580,573m (100%) has been paid for municipal property rates as at 31 March 2025.

The Department still has a projected shortfall amount of about R 142,013m for property rates and R 824,612m for services towards municipalities.

Honourable Speaker

Our revenue enhancement strategies have not yet yielded positive trajectory, our collection rate has been significantly low. However we will continue to leverage on our asset base for more revenue collection. The original target for revenue was R77 408m and the Department managed to collect R40 885m against the adjusted target of R56 043m for the 2024/2025 financial year.

Expanded Public Works Programme

Honourable Speaker

The Free State province had a target of 30 115 work opportunities in the 2024/2025 financial year for all Public Bodies participating on EPWP within the Province. As at the end of 2024/2025 financial year, the Province created **26 372** validated work opportunities, of which over 69% of those were women, 35 % were youth 1% were people with disabilities.

Honourable Speaker, I must also acknowledge the contribution by other state entities within the province such as national departments and non-state sectors. These state entities continue to improve the provincial contribution of the province to 52 440 work opportunities.



The Department will continue to drive awareness programmes to mobilise people with disabilities to participate in the programme. Together with municipalities will be implementing the following programmes; Cash for Waste, Community Work Programme, Cleaning and Greening Programme and National Youth Service Programme.

As at the end of the 2024/2025 reporting cycle, the Department implemented all four programmes with 2 037 work opportunities created, thereby slightly exceeding the annual target of 2 000.

In this financial year, the province has a target of creating **32 645 work opportunities** of which **21 409** of those are expected from provincial departments and **11 236** from municipalities. This commitment is supported by the provincial EPWP grant allocation of **R69 515m with R36 910m** to provincial departments while **R32 605m** is allocated to Municipalities. Notwithstanding this allocation, **Honourable Speaker**, public bodies are expected to augment their grant allocations with baseline budgets to maximise work opportunities and realise their respective targets.

Again the Department will contribute **2 000 work opportunities** in this financial year with a total EPWP budget of **R40 267m** including our grant allocation of **R4,2m** from the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. Out of this annual target, **60%** will benefit women, **55%** youth and **2%** people living with disabilities.

We are committing to source additional funds available from other avenues to expand job creation initiatives beyond our targets.

The Honourable Premier, **Honourable Speaker**, announced that the province will create **32 000** work opportunities under the Expanded Public Works Programme during the State of the Province Address in February 2025. We are committed to the realisation of this commitment.

Honourable Speaker



Last year in October, we launched EPWP Phase V which is about *“To provide the unemployed poor with meaningful work opportunities through the delivery of community assets and services, and actively build economic inclusion mechanisms that empower sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the country’s development agenda.”*

This Phase of EPWP focuses on four key service delivery areas being; **Maintenance of facilities and upgrade of access roads through block paving; Renewable energy projects; Waste Management and Cleaning and Greening of neighbourhoods.** The Department also launched an Artisan Development Programme in October 2024 which will solely focus on maintenance of infrastructure particularly dilapidated buildings and turn them into decent office accommodation. This programme is envisaged to yield no less than **1 000** work opportunities in the next three years.

A total number of **292 Learners** are placed in the Departmental Regional offices to support our maintenance teams under the supervision of qualified and experienced Chief Artisans. Among them a considerable number is undergoing training in Painting, Plumbing, Electrical, Bricklaying, Carpentry and Plastering.

The Medfontein building in Mangaung is currently undergoing major renovations through these Artisan Learners. I am pleased to report to you **Honourable Speaker**, that the construction is at an advanced stage to restore the building to its primary outlook. To-date we have a team of 40 Artisan Learners in the project supporting our Chief Artisans in refurbishing flooring, plumbing, painting, carpentry and joinery. Other teams are placed to deal with day to day maintenance needs in facilities such as MPL Village and other prestige houses.

The footprint of the programme also spreads to the region of Lejweleputswa where other public facilities have now been completed. A typical example is Kopano Complex in Welkom where the Community Sports centre and the Department of Agriculture are already in occupation. A Medical Drug Rehabilitation (MDR) Building



also undergone major renovations and has since been repurposed to office accommodation for the Department of Education.

I must also highlight major success in Thabo Mofutsanyane region, where we have successfully managed to trade test and qualify 28 Artisans. This progress as also seen a number of buildings being renovated and handed over to clients for occupation as follows;

- Department of Health (Ombudsman building)
- Department of Health (Nutrition)
- Department of Human Settlement
- DESTEA
- SASSA Offices Administration Block, SASSA Service point Block and Bethlehem EMS Offices Refurbishment.

I am also pleased to announce that we have successfully forged partnerships with some of the municipalities that have embraced this concept as follows; Mantsopa Local Municipality with 53 Learners, Setsoto Local Municipality with 20 Learners, Dihlabeng Local Municipality with 12 Learners, Metsimaholo Local Municipality with 21 Learners, Ngwathe Local Municipality 20 Learners and Mathjabeng Local Municipality with 20 Learners.

These extended initiatives have seen a total of 146 Learners benefiting with training opportunities. The Learners are helping in these municipalities with direct service delivery pressing needs such as attending to faulty streets lights, road markings to improve safety, pothole repairs, default water meters, waste water treatment works, electrical cable fault finding, water leaks and welding.

Provincial departments are encouraged to give this innovative concept a chance to address some of their immediate maintenance backlog to improve conditions of their public infrastructure. We remain open to productive and progressive collaborations in this regard. The Department will provide personnel with prerequisite skills, support them with stipend allowances and Training while our partners are expected to provide



building material and projects. A total of 170 Learners have been identified and the recruitment processes are being concluded. The Department is making use of accredited Trade Test Centres and independent moderators regulated by CETA.

The Department has partnered with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) in ensuring adequate funding support for this programme. I am pleased to announce to this house that to-date we have received a commitment from Construction Education Training Authority (CETA) **to the value of R9,9m** for training and development of our participants. We also encourage other funding institutions to open their doors for collaboration in ensuring alignment of government resources.

Honourable Speaker,

For the current Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the Department's budget increased from **R 2.169b** in 2024/2025 to **R 2.301b** in 2025/2026. This equates to an increase of 6.10% from last year. The allocation to each of the Departmental programmes for 2025/2026 is divided as follows:

- **Programme 1: Administration - R 208.054m**
- **Programme 2: Public Works and Infrastructure – R 2.030b**
- **Programme 3: EPWP - R 62.907m**

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker

As I conclude, I would like to express my appreciation for the leadership and guidance provided by the Honourable Premier Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae. To my colleagues in the Executive Council, thank you for walking this journey with me.

Words of thanks to the Portfolio Committees on Public Works, Infrastructure, Roads, Transport and Human Settlements, chaired by Honourable D. Van Vuuren and the



Chairperson of SCOPA Honourable Oupa Khoabane for their oversight role and constructive inputs on us that seek to make the Department a productive organ.

The collective work by the officials of the Department led by the Acting HOD, Mr. S. Mtolo is quite evident and much appreciated.

To my family and children, thank you for understanding and your unwavering support. I really appreciate you.

THANK YOU