



DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET VOTE

2026

HON. T.Z MOKOENA
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS(VOTE 13)

**THURSDAY,
23 APRIL 2026**

Thabo Thokoza Secondary
School, Bethlehem



#FSBudgetVote26



human settlements
Department of
Human Settlements
FREE STATE PROVINCE



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

FREE STATE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE BUDGET VOTE SPEECH: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS 2026/2027

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Premier

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Marena le ntlo ya Borena

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Bomme le Bontate

Today I stand here to present the human settlement department budget for the year 2026/27. Through this budget vote presentation, we will also highlight some of the work done and challenges confronted in the last financial year. We are part of the government that is led by the movement of the people, the ANC. We have committed and are now acting on improving service delivery capacity and recalibrate the responsive culture of our officials. To achieve this, we are confronting even the most stubborn elements of state capture and dismantle entrenched destructive interests who have now resorted to uses some online media platforms to project lies and negativity about us. We remain unshaken and not false headlines will make us retreat.

The renewal of state capacity to deliver must confront the culture of laziness, indifference, corruption and all embedded administrative systems that made the dept to fail in the past. We knew that the rebuilding and renewal will earn us enemies from those who benefited from all wrongdoing. Sponsored media articles have sought to project us negatively whilst ignoring the work being done now. The work to provide descent settlements, affordable housing, modernised communities and free quality housing for the needy is gaining momentum. We are now restoring the dignity of our people through the “Beke le Beke” service delivery interventions where we deliver houses in every corner of the free state.

Speaker, we must make service delivery fashionable. The work to service our people must be effortless for all elected leaders and appointed officials of government. Those not willing to change attitude and do their work with the required speed must face consequences. There

are no holy cows we will touch and or move anyone if it's in the interest of service delivery and our people. Speaker, we came from the generation that was inspired by the June 76 detachment and the mid 80s of SAYCO that faced death in pursuit of freedom. I am part of the late eighty's generation of the roaring young lions of OR Tambo who faced the bullets to achieve freedom.

Today this generation of "No retreat, no surrender" and as part of the entire freedom loving people of FS, is now tasked to build a new society that is anchored on descent human settlements that are critical to the wellbeing of our people, restores dignity, enhances economic growth and productivity of our people. we must move away from building communities that are far removed from centres of commerce and industry and reverse apartheid spatial patterns that places the poor and working class far from centres of commerce and industry.

We will work with municipalities to deliver new alternative settlements options that uses the CBDs and nearby land parcels to allow people to live and work in the same vicinity. Reimagining human settlement must require paradigm shift.

The 2026/27 Budget

Speaker, I hereby present the Human Settlements 2026/27 budget of R 1, 189 billion which marks a 7,1% decrease compared to the 2025/26 budget which stood at R 1 279 billion. The allocation for the Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG), which is the main conditional grant, decreases from R889 366 million to R777 134 million for the 2026/2027 financial year which represent a reduction of 6.3%. The national fiscal pressures and the slow population growth rates are some of the factors (in terms of DORA) behind the top slicing of our budget. It's only in the outer years of MTEF that we see a slight increases of R 810 486 million in 2027/2028 financial year and R 837 556 million for the 2028/2029 financial year.

The allocation for the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG) **for the 2026/2027 financial year amounts to R112,839 million**, which is a 30,5% decrease from the R162,353 million in the 2025/2026 financial year. Over the MTEF the ISUPG grant also sees some marginal increase of 1,9% (**R 115,003**) in 2027/2028 financial year, and a 1,5% (**R 116,769 million**) in the 2028/2029 financial year.

There is an earmarked funding of **R 30million** in the 2026/2027 financial year for the Demolition of old two roomed houses that will be replaced with the new BNG houses. This include areas of Ipopeng in Fauriesmith, Dark City in Mangaung, Bronville in Matjhabeng and Extension 2 in Dihlabeng. We also set aside an amount of **R2,567 million** for the EPWP whose skill developments will be outlined later.

| SOURCE OF FUNDING | AMOUNT |
|--|------------------------|
| EQUITABLE SHARE FUNDING | |
| Voted Funds | R 266 552 000 |
| Demolition of 2 roomed houses and construction of BNG houses | R 30 000 000 |
| Total Equitable Share Allocation | R 296 552 000 |
| NATIONAL FUNDING | |
| Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG) | R 777 134 000 |
| Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant for Provinces (ISUPG) | R 112 839 000 |
| Expanded Public Works Programme Integrated Grant for Province (EPWP) | R 2 567 000 |
| Total National Funding Allocation | R 892 540 000 |
| TOTAL DEPARTMENTAL ALLOCATION | R 1 189 092 000 |

ACCOUNT OF PROGRESS: 2024/2025 FINANCIAL YEAR

Last year, we stood before this house and made firm commitments to accelerate service delivery, restore dignity and improve the quality of human settlements across the Free State. Today as we present the 2026/27 budget vote, we also take this opportunity to account on commitments made and the progress achieved during the 25/26 fiscal year.

During the **2025/26** financial year:

- We committed to improve capacity to build more BNG units and of the targets set we only achieved 41,5% of the 1 663. In response, the dept has since reopened the panel process to allow more local contractors to come on board. Once finalised, this will give us a much-needed capacity of contractors to drive our numbers up.
- In relation to decent settlements for our people, we have managed to deliver more than 1 816 serviced sites in greenfield developments.

- The informal settlements upgrade interventions have delivered a total of 2,873 serviced sites and this was against the target of 1 062.
- **Asbestos removal** is now underway and 180 asbestos roofs were replaced as follows; Reddersburg:45, Senekal:45, Viljoenskroon:45 and Welkom:45, does restoring safety and dignity to vulnerable households. More resources are needed here.
- On our work to resolve **Hani Park sewer and water problems**, we can confirm that 261 houses now have running water and the same 261 houses now have sewer lines connected and once pump station refurbishment is complete, these houses will have waterborne toilets (it's done). The Hani Park project once completed will see up to 800 houses having access to both running water and flushable toilets.
- In Nala municipality we have completed 97% of the water and sewer project for 429 sites. Upon completion of remaining work, cleaning of the site and municipality to completing the new pump station these sites will be ready for occupation. We are also engaging municipality to possibly allow construction of new houses to be done simultaneously with the work on the pump station.
- We are now building houses for the Nyakallong, an Allandridge area affected by rising mines water. From the 5 houses already completed we have now received additional 72 sites from Matjhabeng which should now allow us to accelerate our work and move this community to safer place with new houses.
- In terms of our CRUs, we can report that 270 units have been completed at G-Hostel and ready for occupation once bulk services are connected. In Dark and Silver City in Bochabela, Mangaung 130 units are ready for occupation.
- We have registered 1 319 title deeds and new measures are being finalised to Fastrack the process and details of this will be shared later.
- We have handed over the 30 Military veterans houses in Vista Park 3 to qualifying beneficiaries and these houses and additional 30 will be done for the 2026/27.
- We are working to finalise all the incomplete houses in the province and to date 1,349 houses are completed. Our target for 2026/27 is 1 300 houses for completion.

CATALYTIC PROJECTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

Catalytic projects remain central to transforming spatial patterns and unlocking economic potential of our communities. This is not just delivery of infrastructure, but interventions that seeks to open both growth and productive investments by creating new communities that expands the economic base of our towns. In approach, their construction is a major economic

injection and spring-up a new economic zone once completed. A strong intergovernmental coordination and alignment is essential to move these projects forward realise their full impact.

The **Bakenpark Integrated Development in Bethlehem** will be completed in this financial year after the Department terminated the original contractor and consultant. We have appointed three new contractors and a consultant tasked to finish this project by Sept 2026. This mixed housing development entails servicing of 1 400 sites, with sufficient bulk infrastructure such as water, sewer, concrete reservoir, pump stations and internal roads. In December last year the Human Settlements Minister Ms. Thembu Simelane and Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae joined the oversight of the project which culminated in the handing over of 3 contractors who are hard at work building 90 BNG houses. To date all 90 foundations have been cast with 60 units at wall plate level and all units expected to be completed end May 2026.

In Sasolburg, Vaal River City initiative is taking shape, laying the groundwork for a more connected and economically active region. This initiative is now entering a decisive phase during this financial year, wherein we will be completing 4 925 sites in the Wonderfontein project.

Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) is now assessing the bulk infrastructure application for the provision of bulk infrastructure project ahead of the commencement of top structure development. We are also engaged in efforts to find speedy alternatives to the conventional methods around bulk services for the province. Modular and containerised sewer and water treatment plants are central to the interventions we seek.

In **Moqhaka Local Municipality**, we are implementing an integrated human settlement project and of the 5 300 residential sites being developed, we have successfully connected 3 600 sites with water and sewer. The remainder of 1700 is part of the alternative bulk services intervention we seek to speed the completion and final occupation by beneficiaries.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS UPGRADING

Informal settlements remain a major challenge in the province. We have 189 informal settlements housing over 84,000 households. Factors behind these numbers include urbanisation from farming communities, coming of age and need to establish own families and general in migration from nearby provinces and neighbouring countries. Most of these end up without basic services like water, sanitation, electricity and proper roads. Our focus as we upgrade these settlements is on in-situ upgrading, improving conditions where people live, while also identifying alternative sites where needed.

In areas like Phambili Informal Settlements where we have identified an alternative site to relocate the residents to during implementation. progress has been slowed by objections against the development. Objections on their own are varied between those legitimate and those with pure racist undertones that seeks to say blacks must be kept in their township reserves and not anywhere near towns or white farms. What puzzles us here the fact that a community of black people already resides in the area (17years) which simply requires formalization, not neglect. The department remains committed to a development that is properly planned, environmentally responsible and supported by appropriate infrastructure and we are willing to engage on these, anything that signals racist driven objections that are hidden behind some real challenges here will be rejected by us.

Speaker, these objections must first be resolved urgently to allow the development to provide better living conditions for the phambili people. All role players including the municipality must ensure finality to this. A joint task team with COGTA and Municipality will be established to strengthen the application memoranda and address issues raised through objections.

DELIVERY OF PRIORITIES IN THE 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR

Honourable Speaker, in the 2026/2027 financial year, the Department commits to achieving the following:

- Constructing 2112 housing units, including 1300 historically incomplete units, across various programmes
- Rectifying 250 asbestos roofed houses across districts
- Demolish 100 two-roomed houses and build BNG houses across districts
- Finalisation and occupation of military veteran housing units

- Use the EPWP grants to hone the plumbing and plastering skills of many construction workers to enhance the quality of their work.

In terms of serviced sites, the department intends to:

- Deliver 1 905 serviced sites funded through both the Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG) and Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG)
- Realise expansion of bulk infrastructure in strategic nodes

PROVISION OF TITLE DEEDS

Speaker, we come from a history where black South Africans and especially women were not allowed to own property in the past. These categories include those who have lived in municipal properties after 1988 but before 1994 and women who could not even inherit properties from their deceased husbands. We are undertaking efforts to ensure all those that are affected do secure their title deeds and become full owners. The Department will be upgrading these permits or deeds of grants into full ownership with title deeds. We have already tested this process successfully in municipalities such as Dihlabeng and Matjhabeng. We will now be rolling this to other municipalities so that more people can have the security and dignity of owning their homes.

Speaker we are also finalising interventions to ensure that delivery of BNG houses comes with title deeds. Together with municipalities, the appointed conveyancers, our teams and the deeds office should now be guided by the systems we are finalising to fastrack title deeds delivery in the province. We have partnered with the Master of the High Court to assist communities on estate related matters where this is affecting issuance of title deeds to properties of the deceased beneficiaries.

Speaker this is more than just administrative work, it is about restoring dignity, security and hope. Our commitment is simple: **EVERY HOUSE WE HANDOVER MUST COME WITH ITS TITLE DEED.**

We have completed the verification process on **Hlano houses**. A total of 3 322 Hlano properties have been verified across the province. The department is in a process of consolidating a detailed report that will enable Human Settlement to intervene in this matter. We can report that the national department is in court with Hlano on matters of interest and amounts demanded as opposed to the debt book. once resolved this should enable

beneficiaries or their dependents to have title deeds and certainty about ownership of these properties.

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Enhanced and coordinated stakeholder management is critical to our ability to achieve our goals. The importance of ensuring alignment with key stakeholders guarantees speedy approval and timeous onboarding of our projects. If stakeholders such as Municipalities, NHBC, Labour department and project teams are not aligned from the onset, projects slow down, and communities are left waiting longer than they should. To address this, we are changing how we work. Stakeholders are now being brought together earlier in the planning process. This allows for better coordination, clearer roles, and ensures that plans are complete and approved on time before implementation begins.

Another major source of delays is **beneficiary management**. This function has largely been left to Municipalities, where coordination is often weak. As a result, site allocations can become inconsistent and disputed, creating confusion on the ground and slowing down housing construction. We are responding by strengthening oversight, improving the accuracy of beneficiary lists, and introducing clearer and more transparent allocation processes. To achieve this, we are reintroducing the site **allocation committees** where the department and municipalities will jointly manage the allocation of all beneficiaries where human settlements is developing sites. Getting this right from the beginning reduce disputes and ensure that completed homes are handed over to the correct beneficiaries without unnecessary delays.

ACCREDITATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

The Accreditation Programme is meant to help Municipalities gradually take on human settlement's functions. The Department has been supporting Mangaung, Matjhabeng, Metsimaholo, Maluti-a-Phofung, Moqhaka and Dihlabeng Municipalities since 2012 to build their capacity, but none are fully equipped to perform these functions to date. For instance, Mangaung has been granted levels 1 and 2 accreditations since 2013 but has not been able to carry out these responsibilities as its financial management, governance and overall capacity is challenged. To address this, we need a closer collaboration with the National Department of Human Settlements, COGTA, Treasury and SALGA to review the implementation programme.

ERADICATION OF ASBESTOS ROOFING

The province has effectively begun with asbestos removal project. I can report that the contractor as appointed and in compliance with required health and safety standards has finished all 180 houses identified. For the 2026/27 we have set aside R 30 million for 250 houses for those identified areas. The province is amongst those with high numbers of asbestos roofs with an estimation of 33 thousand that reportedly requires +- R 4 billion rands to eradicate.

The department is considering number of options to manage this challenge in mitigation of both health hazards faced by our people and the unavailable resources needed to eradicate asbestos. Speaker we are open to alternatives that can help us manage these identified risks that we are sitting with.

INNOVATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES

As part of the interventions, we are considering in our response to the ever-growing needs for provision of descent housing in a faster manner, is the ABT/IBT method. The method under consideration should give us the means accelerate housing provision for both rural and urban centres while adhering to the issues of safety and longevity.

The department is exploring mixed bag of options that will be piloted in the current financial year. Some of those we are engaging are here to showcase their products as part of today's proceedings. We have already contracted some of this technology for our mud houses eradication projects in both Qwa-Qwa and Thabanchu. The CRU project in Welkom and our BNG housing project in Ventersburg are also part of where the IBT will be considered.

MILITARY VETERAN HOUSES

The welfare and the support provided to the military veterans is the primary responsibility of the department of Defence. In terms of Human Settlements, we receive the list as generated by the defence department and build as per the agreement and in line with the agreed specifications. This does not include maintenance as it this belongs to beneficiaries similar to BNGs.

A memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in this regard was concluded between the Department of Military Veterans and Human Settlements for the realization of the Military

Veterans Housing Assistance Programme. According to the MOU the Department of Human Settlements is charged with the responsibility of utilizing the Breaking New Ground (BNG) housing subsidy whilst the Department of Military Veterans top up the BNG housing subsidy to build 50m² (fifty square meter) houses for military veterans and their dependents. In the 2026/27 financial year the Department will build thirty (30) military veterans houses as part of our plan to reintegrate military veterans and their dependents into various communities. The municipalities of Maluti a Phofung, Moqhaka, Metsimaholo, Matjhabeng, Mantsopa and Dihlabeng are next in our list for military veterans.

The Department will also convene a Military Veterans Imbizo in the current financial year to engage on some challenges that have arisen on issues affecting our space. Furthermore, the department will be intervening in the following areas:

- Availing serviced sites to military veterans who are employed but are unable to access government subsidized housing units so that they can incrementally build for themselves.
- Provide the dependents of verified bona fide military veterans more especially those that are qualifying for a 40 square meter house.

The Department will conduct awareness to ensure that beneficiaries of military veterans' houses take full responsibility for maintenance of their own houses.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Honourable Speaker,

We are strengthening interventions in the social and affordable housing market, particularly for the “missing middle” who are either newly formed families or those females or males seeking to build a home for themselves. The intervention instruments we seek to use here is both **First Home Finance (FHF)** as well as the **Community Residential Units (CRU)** Programme. In the coming weeks we will meet with about 90 first home finance beneficiaries as part of profiling this programme and issue them with certificates of subsidy award. This will take place at OR Tambo building on a date to be set.

In pursuit of the programme to undermine apartheid spatial patterns and place our people close to the centres of commerce to reduce both the burden of transport cost and time spent

travelling between work and home and to this end we are pursuing few inner-city residential settlement interventions. One of the interventions will see the development of the NBS Building in Mangaung with a target of newly formed young families through the first home finance programme. The project is also expected to contribute towards Mangaung inner-city revitalisation programme.

In the 2026/27 financial year, the Free State Department of Human Settlements will strengthen partnerships with accredited Social Housing Institutions (SHIs) to accelerate the delivery of well-located, affordable rental housing. These partnerships will enable the province to leverage institutional capacity, technical expertise, and funding streams available through the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA).

Our focus to provide decent housing for the young families will also form part of the Barkenpark extension 6/7 where a total of 100 sites is set aside for stand-alone housing development. These are earmarked for the young families through the first home finance programme. This category is the productive cohort and future of the province, and we must accelerate our interventions to provide decent housing for them.

FIRST HOME FINANCE (FHF)

Speaker, the First Home Finance (FHF) programme formerly known as FLISP has enabled the department to make significant in-roads in upscaling the provision of houses particularly in the young family's space that is not covered by the either government BNG or the private finance. In the 2026/27 financial year, this programme has a budget allocation of **R12 million**.

COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL UNITS (CRUs)

Few weeks ago the province had the pleasure of showcasing progress made to the Dark and Silver city hostels in Bochabela - Mangaung to the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa.

The first phase of the construction work has resulted in the completion of 130 units, bottom site with 100 units and top site with 30 units. The first in-take of 40 approved tenants is scheduled for the end of April 2026, and the process will be administered by the Facility Management Company that is already appointed by the department. This is an on-going process as part of the incremental tenanting for the completed units. We are currently

engaging the community of Ward 3 in Mangaung to address the historical issues around the occupation of Dark and Silver City.

The G-Hostel in Matjhabeng Local Municipality, has to date recorded 270 units that are complete. Alternative engineering solutions are currently being sought to resolve the electricity as well as water and sewer challenges for the G-Hostel. The department is currently exploring the development of a package plant as part of a temporary solution towards infrastructure challenges within Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

Speaker the department has set aside R 100 million for 2026/27 for both the G hostel and Dark and silver city.

ENHANCED PEOPLE'S HOUSING PROCESS (EHP)

The Department has set aside 20 units to be implemented through the Enhanced Peoples' Housing Process (EHP) methodology. The department will work with traditional leaders to identify needy beneficiaries from traditional leadership communities. In this approach we would like to see beneficiaries taking part to build their own houses in the traditional rural areas of Thabanchu, Qwaqwa and Vrede areas. The EHP will also see the uptake of some of the technologies displayed here today and mobilise our people to work together towards a common purpose in the true spirit of Masakhane.

POSITIONING THE RENTAL TRIBUNAL

The Rental Housing Tribunal is a key instrument of justice and protection for vulnerable tenants and responsible landlords in ensuring that the constitutional right to adequate housing is not undermined by unfair rental practices. We must confront case backlogs and slow turnaround times, limited public awareness, noncompliance by landlords and tenants, and weak enforcement of Tribunal rulings. In line with our repositioning agenda, we are taking the Tribunal closer to the people to ensuring that no tenant or landlord is left behind due to distance or lack of access.

Illegal evictions and exploitative rental practices of particularly off campus students and vulnerable tenants have no place in a constitutional democracy founded on dignity and equality. A functional rental market is essential to achieving spatial justice and expanding housing opportunities for our people.”

We reaffirm our commitment to a rental housing sector that is fair, regulated, and accessible. The Rental Housing Tribunal will be strengthened as a pillar of justice, ensuring that the rights of both tenants and landlords are protected, and that dignity in housing is upheld for all.”

EMERGENCY HOUSING RESPONSE

Honourable Speaker,

The province is more often confronted with number of emergencies that requires immediate responses to alleviate the plight of those in distress. Emergency interventions were moved to national with the province mainly playing a coordinating role for the required intervention. We have however experienced several frustrations and failure to respond adequately and in time. We have therefore set aside **R 20 million for the provincial response** that must allow prompt response when emergencies do arise. This budget of R 20 million is ringfenced and will use contractors from our panels for a quick response during emergencies. Some of the interventions will include the following.

- Immediate relieve by providing temporary residential units (TRUs).
- Repair/ renovate or rebuild a permanent structure (RDP).
- Relocating distressed families/ households to alternative serviced sites.

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (EPWP)

The Department has been allocated R2,5 million to realise not only work opportunities but to improve the livelihood of mainly young people in getting employed. An analysis of the number of BNG houses we handed over, painted a disheartening picture of the skills base of our people especially in the plumbing and plastering trade. The department has since taken a decision that two BNG housing contractors in the Mangaung and Dihlabeng areas will be utilised to train 10 young people on site on these skills including in the manufacturing of aluminium window frames which will soon be a new feature and face of our BNG houses. The R2,5 million will be directed towards the basic stipends of these young people including related costs of training for the next 6 months.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND GOVERNANCE

The department is undertaking a deliberate institutional reform process to restore efficiency, accountability and ethical governance. A key pillar of this reform is the devolution of decision-

making powers to district directors, reversing the previous over-centralisation that resulted in delays, bottlenecks, and weakened responsiveness to community needs.

However, the department recognises that devolution without control invites governance failures. Therefore, the delegation of authority will be accompanied by strict compliance, oversight and consequence management framework. District directors are no longer passive administrators, they are now custodians of service delivery, governance and accountability within their jurisdictions. We inherited the department that was beset with:

- Financial misconduct
- Abuse of state resources
- Supply Chain irregularities
- Fraud and corruption in project implementation

These are not merely administrative lapses – they constitute violations of law. The department will strengthen:

- Ethics training and awareness
- Mandatory declaration of financial interests
- Lifestyle audits where necessary

Speaker, we have secured new laptops and desktops to the tune of **R 5 million** for the entire department in a decisive bid to upgrade and modernise the department ICT capability. This will improve turnaround times, strengthen coordination with municipalities and support faster responses to community needs. The investment is about building a more effective and responsive government that is working for the people.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Department is currently reviewing its Organizational Structure and aligning Human Capital and Administrative Design with Service Delivery outcomes. This review process will enable us to calibrate the department and be able to position it to be at the fore of providing adequate services to our people. Honourable Speaker, in line with our commitment to reposition the department and give it a fighting chance we will be filling some of the vacant and funded positions in the current financial year. We will also be able to appoint 37 interns across various units within the department for a period of two (2) years to allow them to acquire the necessary workplace experience that will prepare them for the job market.

CONCLUSION

Speaker, In the execution of our work we are inspired by the work of OR Tambo, Chris Hani and many heroes that taught us, that service to our people is a revolutionary act, that must be effortless and be driven by love of one's people. Our struggle is not over, and the work to build a new and better society continues. Enemies of our struggle are also hard at work to reverse our gains of freedom. They have unleashed the "SANDINISTA" moment on us, where through propaganda and lies they hope to divide our people, demoralize them, make them lose faith in their leaders. Everything will be projected as wrong and failure or and they will deny progress that is glaring for all to see. Through persistent misinformation they hope to eventually defeat the struggle for freedom.

Like I said "no retreat, no surrender" the best defence to is to tirelessly work with our people to change their lives and defend democracy. Through Beke le Beke we will deliver services that prove that this government delivers. Speaker, tangible delivery is demonstrated by ongoing work on some of these old revived projects and new ones unleashed in the following areas,

- Two days ago, in Clarens we introduced a contractor to install water and sewer network in 336 sites.
- We are going to **Warden** for Water and Sewer services of 1009 sites in Ezenzeleni Ext 7,8 and 9
- Vrede Thembalihle Ext 8, Water and Sewer for 1334 sites and we will introduce a new contractor in May this year.
- Memel we are finishing 73 incomplete houses and contractor is on site as we speak.
- Intabazwe Harrismith - Silahlwe water and sewer for 879 sites. A new contractor is appointed, and site establishment is underway with work resuming in May 2026.
- Moidraai in Sasolburg is continuing and should be completed in September 2026. together with the municipality we must attend to the issue of bulk services.
- In Winburg, Water and sewer for 581 sites. The contractor is back on site and is expected to be completed by September 2026.
- In Henneman Phomolonhg. Water and sewer for 1642 sites. The contractor is back on site and is expected to be completed by February 2027.

The work to turn around the department is underway and gaining momentum. For this we must also thank the highly energetic and dedicated team led by HOD Adv Phahlo and senior management. We are at 40% in terms of departmental turnaround and more needs to be

done. Everyone in the department must earn the right to work for the department through responsive service to our people. My office staff as Led by the Head of Office Mr. Lebo, I thank you together with the rest of the team.

Thank you very much Premier for guidance and support. Your leadership style makes it easier for us to serve our people. exco members thank you very much, it's a team effort. Thank you the ANC, my movement, the people's movement. Let us make service delivery fashionable. Finally let me thank my family, my beloved partner, and the kids for understanding the sleepless nights and time spent away on duty. I am because you are. The people of free state let us make it work.

Amandla