



DEPARTMENT
of

PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

THURSDAY, 30 APRIL 2026 | 10H00

KOPANONG INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE, WELKOM

BUDGET VOTE 2026



free state department of public works and infrastructure



public works & infrastructure
Department of
Public Works & Infrastructure
FREE STATE PROVINCE

A FREE STATE THAT WORKS FOR ALL





Department of Public Works and Infrastructure

2026/2027 Budget Vote 9 Speech

Tabled by MEC Dibolelo Mance, 30 April 2026

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 leaders

Distinguished Guests

Comrades and Friends



Introduction

Honourable Speaker

It is my honour to present the Budget Vote for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for the 2026/27 financial year. This Vote reflects our commitment to restoring the integrity of government infrastructure, strengthening service delivery, and ensuring that the Free State's immovable asset portfolio is managed with professionalism, accountability and foresight.

We entered this seventh administration with a clear electoral mandate to do more, to work differently, and to work together for the betterment of all our people. The ANC's 2024 Election Manifesto directs us to accelerate inclusive growth, expand job creation, reduce poverty, and build a capable developmental state. Public Works and Infrastructure stand at the centre of this mission because infrastructure is the backbone of service delivery, economic activity and social dignity.

Honourable Speaker,

The President reminded us in the State of the Nation Address on 12 February 2026 that although progress has been made since the dawn of democracy, far too many of our communities remain trapped in poverty and joblessness. The Premier has equally emphasised the need for a government that delivers, a government that maintains what it builds, and a state that places people at the centre of development.

Honourable Speaker, we table this Budget Vote at a time when the world is confronting profound instability. The global economy is being reshaped by geopolitical conflict, rising energy prices and persistent cost-of-living pressures. The International Monetary Fund reports that the conflict in the Middle East earlier this year has disrupted global supply chains, pushed inflation upward to 4.4%, and slowed global growth projections to 3.1% for 2026. The United Nations further cautions that political, economic and technological tensions are placing developing economies under severe strain and slowing progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. Across the world, business leaders now identify geopolitical instability, energy volatility and supply-chain disruptions as the most significant risks to economic performance.

This global turbulence affects every province, every municipality and every household. It demands that we build a state that is resilient, disciplined and capable, a state that shields its people from global shocks by strengthening internal systems, maintaining infrastructure, and ensuring that public resources are used efficiently, transparently and in the public interest.



DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET VOTE

2026



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The Department's appropriation for the 2026/27 financial year stands at R2.3 billion. While this allocation reflects government's continued commitment to infrastructure and service delivery, it also lays bare the fiscal constraints facing our province. The increase in this budget is driven largely by the escalating cost of municipal services, property rates, and the maintenance of an ageing asset portfolio. In real terms, this represents a 1.21% decrease from the previous year, a decrease that will further exacerbate our ability to meet the huge backlogs in maintenance, nor the rising cost of utilities and property rates.

This context demands discipline, innovation and partnership. It demands that we prioritise planned maintenance over emergency repairs, because every cent spent on reactive maintenance is money taken away from job creation and service delivery. It demands that we strengthen internal capacity, accelerate infrastructure delivery, modernise property management, and align EPWP with maintenance and facilities management to create meaningful work opportunities.

Honourable Speaker,

This Budget Vote is therefore not merely a financial outline, but a political commitment to action. It is an opportunity to reflect honestly on the progress we have made, to confront the challenges that remain, and to outline the concrete steps we will take in the year ahead. It is a roadmap on how the Department will contribute to the 7th Administration's priorities and to the realisation of our Vision 2030, a Free State that is inclusive, prosperous and capable.





Administration

Honourable Speaker,

A solid administrative base is of fundamental importance for an institution that is responsible for leading infrastructure development, its maintenance and job creation efforts. The functions provided by administration programme are rooted in a strong legislative framework and operate as an integrated system in line with best practices, thereby ensuring good governance. The provision of a conducive environment allows line management to improve its output and concentrate on the Department's core functions to provide efficient service to clients and communities, which will remain a focus of this Programme during this financial year.

The Department will also continue to engage in capacity building to enhance skills and ensure retention of scarce skills. To this end, the Department has put in place innumerable programmes. Training and capacity building programmes are going to be vigorously strengthened to enhance our internal capacity.

Honourable Speaker,

Allow me to highlight what we have achieved in the past financial year, the Department completed 44 training interventions against an annual target of 25 achieving 176%. These included critical programmes such as Public Administration NQF 4–6, Managing Performance, Cable Diagnostics, Mentoring and Coaching, Basic Computer Training, Project Management (Microsoft Project), Introduction to Cyber Security, Women in Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Working at Heights, Scaffolding Erector Unit, and the Compulsory Induction Programme. These interventions directly strengthened our technical, administrative and leadership capacity.

The Department has made notable progress in strengthening its workforce. Against a target of 30 posts, we successfully filled 37 posts, achieving 123% of our target. These appointments have stabilised operations and strengthen our internal maintenance and administrative capacity. I am pleased to report that the Department currently employs 1,131 staff members, of whom 634 are females, representing 56%, and 497 are males, representing 44%.

In line with our diversity and inclusion policy, we also employ 45 people with disabilities, constituting 4% of the total workforce. We did not only employ them but has ensured that they are provided with relevant tools of trade. At Senior Management Service level, the Department has achieved gender parity, with females and males each representing 50%, reflecting our continued commitment to transformation, equity, and fairness in the workplace.



In strengthening Employment Equity, the Department continues to prioritise equitable representation across occupational levels, with a particular focus on improving the participation of differently abled persons and increasing female representation in Senior Management level, technical and engineering fields. Employment Equity remains a central pillar of our Human Resource strategy, ensuring that recruitment, promotions and development opportunities advance transformation and fairness.

As an equal opportunity employer, the Department continues to be guided by its approved strategy, Employment Equity Plan, and Human Resource Plan in building a capable, inclusive, and representative workforce. Furthermore, the Department currently hosts 36 BANKSETA internship incumbents deployed across various units, contributing to skills development and strengthening institutional capacity. In the current financial year, the Department will also implement a Graduate Development Programme in the built environment sector.

Honourable Speaker, during the year under review, the Department conducted job evaluations in terms of the Directive on Automated Job Evaluation and Job Grading System for the Public Service, utilising the COMPENSATE system. A total of 52 posts were evaluated to ensure alignment of grading and weighting with job functions, responsibilities, and organisational requirements, thereby supporting a fit-for-purpose organisational structure to advance the Department's mandate. In line with its capacity development strategy and vision of an efficient, responsive, and developmental institution, the Department will undertake the phased filling of all 125 posts during the 2026/27 financial year to address capacity gaps and improve service delivery.

In the past year we have started to advertise critical positions in the department, these positions are in different stages of being filled.

In addition, the Department continues to implement the Voluntary Early Retirement Programme (VERP) as part of workforce renewal and cost-containment measures.

Honourable Speaker, I must report to the house that 12 colleagues have taken this option and have exited the Department, we give gratitude and thanks for their unwavering service. Their departure forms part of our broader organisational renewal strategy, creating space for critical skills, improving organisational agility and supporting succession planning.

To further modernize our recruitment processes, the Department successfully implemented the E-Recruitment Solution, achieving 100% of the annual target. This digital platform has streamlined applications, improved transparency, reduced processing times, and ensured that all applicants, especially youth, have equal access to opportunities.





The payment of service providers within 30 days, **Honourable Speaker**, cannot be over emphasised. We are committed to ensuring that no undue suffering is placed on our suppliers because of delayed payments. To this end, we are currently capacitating SCM to improve processing times, tighten controls, and ensure full compliance with Treasury Regulations. These improvements are essential for restoring confidence, supporting local economic activity, and ensuring that the Department remains a reliable and ethical partner in the provincial economy.

Public Works – Maintenance

Honourable Speaker

Appropriate infrastructure maintenance creates jobs. For example, maintenance needs to be done year after year. Furthermore, much maintenance can only be done, or best be done, by labour-intensive methods, and it is important that government plans for employment creation that give value to maintenance. Infrastructure maintenance must be seen as a strategic tool to support improved service delivery, to unlock funding, to extend infrastructure to the poorest of our communities and to support the nation's economy. Maintenance of existing infrastructure should not be seen as of secondary importance to the apparently more attractive prospect of new infrastructure. Our focus is not only on cutting ribbons but also on maintaining the existing infrastructure.

Honourable Speaker, maintenance is about making sure that our buildings and facilities are safe and compliant to occupational Health Standards and that they provide the much-needed services to our people at all material times. We will continue in our efforts to restore some of the dilapidated buildings and put them into good use.

During the 2025/26 financial year we made progress on key planned projects, this progress reflects our unwavering commitment to infrastructure maintenance and the enhancement of service delivery. The projects are as follows:

- **Fire Lift Installation:** We procured a fire lift for O.R. Tambo House, which is currently undergoing installation. The process is projected to take approximately eight weeks, after which the lift will be commissioned for operational use.
- **Lady Brand House Refurbishment:** The refurbishment of Lady Brand House has been successfully completed. This facility is now utilized by the Department of Agriculture.
- **Solar Energy Projects:** We have successfully completed the installation of solar energy-saving initiatives at both the MPL Village and the Prestige Houses,





furthering our commitment to sustainable energy solutions. The successful implementation of these energy-saving projects underscores our department's commitment to making positive changes and making a meaningful impact on the environment and saving energy. We remain dedicated to pursuing sustainable solutions and contributing to a greener future for all.

- **Switchgear Project:** The switchgear project at the Fidel Castro Building was completed within the financial year, enhancing the building's electrical infrastructure and safety standards.
- **EMS Building:** A service provider has been appointed with project completion anticipated within the current financial year.

In addition to the above, the **Fidel Castro Building's** first floor is scheduled to be completed by our internal Artisans. The **Medfontein building** entails refurbishment and renovations that are done internally by our artisans. Furthermore, projects at **Kopano office Complex** Rehabilitation, **Voortrekker Hospital**, **Fidel Castro Building** generators, **Hamilton Building** solar, Qwaqwa fence upgrade, and Welkom SCM stores are planned for completion within this 2026/2027 financial year. We continue to prioritize a safe working environment by performing conditional assessments for state-owned buildings, ensuring their safety, availability for use, and the prevention of injuries and fatalities.

Recognizing the high maintenance costs associated with lifts in our state-owned buildings, we plan to install new lifts in several facilities to address these challenges effectively.

Honourable Speaker

The Department continues to implement a diverse portfolio of infrastructure projects across all districts, including new builds, upgrades, rehabilitation, and maintenance. These projects are the following:

- Hamilton Regional Office Phase 2
- Adelaide Hall Upgrade
- Bethulie Office Upgrade
- Bothobapelo Upgrade
- Fidel Castro Building Lift and Generator Upgrades
- Old Reserve Bank Rehabilitation





- 4th Raad Zaal Rehabilitation
- Free State House

These projects form part of a multi-year infrastructure pipeline funded through the Equitable Share, Infrastructure Enhancement Allocation, and Immovable Asset Management Programme.

Furthermore, our water saving initiative remain robust with current savings exceeding millions of water usage. These accomplishments and ongoing initiatives represent a significance stride forward for the Department. We remain dedicated to maintaining this momentum throughout the current and future financial years,

Project Management Unit

Honourable Speaker

Infrastructure is the foundation of everyday life. It is a means to the end. Infrastructure, in the form of public buildings, roads, water and sewerage systems, electricity and other services, supports quality of life and is the foundation of a healthy economy. That is why every project we deliver must be matched by a plan to keep it working.

The National Development Plan clearly directs that a more efficient and competitive infrastructure is required to facilitate economic activity that is conducive to growth and job creation. Across South Africa, infrastructure remains the backbone of our development agenda, driving economic growth, enabling service delivery, and shaping the quality of life for our citizens.

An advanced basic infrastructure would put our country in a more favourable position to focus on improving productivity for growing and developing our local economy and enhance our competitiveness on the international stage.

Honourable Speaker

One of the primary functions of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is to build schools in order to enhance the provision of basic quality education; and leading the drive for a long and healthy life for all South Africans by constructing functional and accessible healthcare facilities. We must acknowledge that our infrastructure delivery performance has not always matched our ambitions. Projects often face delays, cost escalations, and coordination challenges. These are not isolated incidents they reflect systemic constraints that require collective attention and reform.



In carrying out our mandate of delivering socio-economic infrastructure projects on behalf of client departments the following Department of Education projects are still under construction.

Father Balink Primary School in Parys is progressing well and **sitting at 78%** and should be completed soon. It is to replace the current prefabricated structures the learners are accommodated in.

Boitumelong Special School Hostel in Thaba Nchu is designed to accommodate 200 children, 100 girls and 100 boys with different learning disabilities. This school hostel project is at 42% complete. **Trompsburg Special School Hostel** is to accommodate 200 disabled children from all corners of the Xhariep District Municipality is **40% complete**. **Trompsburg Special School** will accommodate 1000 children from the Xhariep District Municipality, and the project is at 39%. The school will have facilities such as Autism Classes and different trades' workshops to equip the learners with practical skills. **Morena Tshohisi Primary School in Makgolokweng**, Harrismith is currently at 51% completion. The school when completed will accommodate 1000 learners. Most of the construction work was subcontracted to local SMMEs, and mostly women contractors.

The school hostel **Katlego Mpumelelo Secondary School** in Sasolburg is 95% complete, the only outstanding work to be completed is the school hall. **DR Sello school** in Viljoenskroon was completed previously, with the hall still outstanding. We can confirm that the this hall was completed in December 2025.

For the Department of Health, **Honourable Speaker**, we are busy with the construction of **Thandanani Clinic** in Thabong Welkom and it is at 96,5% completion. This clinic will relieve the other clinics within its locality as it is in a newly developed area. **Rheederpark Clinic** also in Welkom is also envisaged to lessen pressure on the smaller clinic in this part of town sitting at 68% progress. There is a growing community in the area, and this clinic could not have come at a better time. A landmark investment in primary healthcare infrastructure is taking shape in Thaba Nchu with the new Dinaane Clinic, which is at 38%, delivered entirely in-house by the skilled professionals of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

This project stands as a proud demonstration of our department's capacity to plan, design, and execute world-class public facilities without reliance on external consultants. Beyond its role as vital healthcare access point for the surrounding community, Dinaane Clinic has been built to the highest standards of energy efficiency featuring double-glazed windows, cavity walls and comprehensive floor, wall and roof insulation ensuring that operational costs are reduced. Dinaane Clinic is not just a building; it is a statement of what government can achieve when it invests in its own people and commits to infrastructure that serves communities for generations to come.





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 to complete it. This hospital project is progressing very well at 45,5% completion.

We are also busy with the construction of Thusanong Building in Mangaung for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure which will house COGTA and Traditional Leaders, and the project is progressing at 85%.

These projects bring services closer to communities, stimulate local economies, and create opportunities for SMMEs and local contractors.

Property Management **Honourable Speaker**

The Provincial government remains committed in the management of the property portfolio in a manner that serves the people of the province to enhance socio-economic development. We are strategically giving priority in this area in line with the 7th administration priority 1 on driving inclusive growth and job creation.

The Department is intentionally advancing transformation objectives within its property leasing portfolio by increasing the participation of women, persons with disabilities, and youth in leasing opportunities sourced from private landlords. This objective will be realised through the advertisement of accommodation needs and appointment of prospective landlords. This initiative seeks to promote economic participation by all identified groups. Furthermore, we have scrutinised the previous lease contracts to ensure the government is not disadvantaged by any clauses, as it was the case before.

The Department is the custodian of all Immovable Assets registered in the name of the Free State Provincial Government. The immovable asset register is now standing at 4882 properties and is continually updated in compliance with the Treasury asset management minimum requirements. The value of these assets amounts to R 13 000 billion.

During the previous financial year, the Department identified 29 unused and dilapidated properties for disposal through a competitive bidding process. In preparation for this process, independent professional valuers were appointed to determine the market-related values of the properties. The valuation exercise has now been concluded. The Department is ready to proceed with the advertisement of the properties.





Honourable Speaker, we successfully hosted the Property Investment Summit on 27 November 2025, during which 16 properties for various development models, including BOT (Build, Operate, Transfer), ROT (Refurbish, Operate, Transfer) were showed-cased to potential investors. The Department is currently implementing phase 2 of the process, which entails the registration of the projects with National Treasury and conducting feasibility studies of the properties. The summit added much impetus to our very Free State Growth and Development Strategy. It is a direct response to empower the Free State business sector and the only way to transform the property relations in the province of Free State.

The Department is continuing with the process of rectifying the erroneously registered properties in Thaba Nchu. The work has been distributed to appointed panel of conveyancers for the rectification and registration of the affected properties.

Working together with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development we have shared a list of farms to determine their productivity and for the development of small-scale farming. The Department of Agriculture has completed the verification and assessment process and will provide us with the assessment report when is finalised. The Department will continue identifying relevant pieces of land from the asset register for the benefit of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Furthermore, the Department is responsible for the provision of office accommodation to all Client Departments that require functional and efficient workspaces for government operations. The identification of unused state-owned properties for the refurbishment and conversion into office accommodations continues to play a significant role in reducing the Department's expenditure on operating leases. For the past seven years we have successfully managed to refurbish 19 state owned properties as accommodation for client departments.

Over the Medium – Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period, the Department has planned to refurbish identified state-owned properties, which includes but not limited to Bethulie, and Old Reserve Bank, Bothobapelo School, Sandstone, which will be repurposed to office accommodation.

We will continue to use different streams to enhance revenue collection. The revenue target for the previous financial year was R 57 883 000 of which R 48 276 971 was collected. Part of increasing the revenue generation is the asset verification process that is undertaken each financial year.

In assisting municipalities to sustain service delivery, the Department continuously spend all its allocated budget for property rates and municipal services each financial year. 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.

Though there's fiscal constraints in the Province, a total amount of R 697,811 million has been paid to municipalities for municipal services and R 562,086 million has been paid for property rates till the end of March 2026 for the current financial year. The Department still has a projected shortfall amount of about R 102,854m for property rates and R 908,983m for services towards municipalities.

For any organisation to make informed strategic decisions, it must place both its physical and financial assets at the core of its operations. To enhance operational efficiency and long-term attainment of its goals, asset management is sacrosanct for reducing costs and maximising value creation.

In this regard, the Department is at an advanced stage of procuring the Integrated Property Management System. The digital system will improve access and accuracy of the data recorded in the immovable asset register. This system will be able to integrate various functions of the Department, allow and improve segregation of duties to eliminate human errors.

Security

The security of our property is vitally important to our improved service delivery; the department is responsible for provision of security services to all multi-tenanted government buildings. The mandate is derived from Minimum Physical Security Standards as recommended by the Government Security Regulation Act.

The Department currently safeguards twenty-five (25) sites in the Free State. We will continue to introduce advanced measures in the physical and electronic security we perform to our buildings. Our security personnel will receive intensive training on pertinent areas of security administration. The Department is currently training thirty-four (34) participants as security officers under the Expanded Public Works Program in the current financial year which will assist in reducing incidents of theft and vandalism in state properties and reducing expenditure on private securities.

Expanded Public Works Programme

Honourable Speaker

The Department as the custodian of EPWP in the province committed to create a total of 2 000 work opportunities for the unemployed in the current financial year. These jobs were to be created in meaningful and strategic focus areas of service delivery such as Infrastructure maintenance, Greening, Cleaning and beautification of public buildings as well as assisting in some municipalities with waste management and collection.



In line with this commitment, I am pleased to announce on behalf of the department that by end of quarter four, 2 071 work opportunities for the unemployed Free State citizens were created. These work opportunities were created through the implementation of four programmes namely.

- Cash for Waste
- Cleaning and Greening
- National Youth Service Programme and
- Artisan Development Programme.

Honourable Speaker, In October 2024, our department launched the Artisan Development Programme with the aim of enhancing our construction maintenance strategies on public buildings. Since the launch of the programme, we have been yielding positive outcomes in terms of our objectives especially efficient reaction in addressing maintenance needs. We have also seen a rise in the number of our Artisan Trainees who undergo trade test to become competent and qualified Artisans. To-date the programme has managed to qualify 45 Artisans and 17 of them recently qualified during March this year. The Department has extended an invitation to all the newly qualified Artisans and am proud to announce that all of them have joined us today to celebrate this outstanding achievement with us.

Our artisans have exhibited exceptional dedication and commitment towards their professional growth, and the results of their training are already becoming evident in the quality of work being produced. We are confident that with continued support and investment in their development, our artisans will further excel in their roles and contribute positively to the department's objectives.

Despite fiscal cost measures, we further commit to set up the same target for the new financial year as minimum threshold we should achieve. We are also putting measures in place to source external funds in upscaling our efforts to go beyond the set targets as unemployment remains a key national challenge. We therefore encourage SETAs to work with public sector in collaboration to ensure alignment of public resources to optimise service delivery.

Honourable Speaker

As the Department we commit to fund job creation initiatives and welcome the EPWP Integrated grant allocated by National Department of Public Works to the tune of **R5, 3m for 2026/27 financial year**. We further commit to augment the EPWP grant by **R42, 5m** towards all EPWP initiatives for 2026/2027 financial year. This will bring the total EPWP budget to **R47,9m in total** just for our department alone.





To ensure optimal utilisation of this budget and value for money, we intend to pay particular attention to strategic areas of our core mandate. This includes alignment of EPWP to our maintenance projects as well as facilities management. Our strategic partnerships with Municipalities and other Departments will also be prioritised.

We have drawn positive lessons to our collaboration with other public bodies on Artisan Development Programme which has shown positive successes. I am pleased to report to this August house that the Initiative have made an impact on key service delivery challenges facing our infrastructure especially maintenance. Our Artisans have provided much needed support in maintenance of streetlights, underground electrical services, water leaks in public buildings, minor structural repairs in municipal facilities as well as road markings to improve road safety. The following public bodies benefitted in this programme;

- Dihlabeng Local Municipality (21)
- Mantsopa Local Municipality (53)
- Metsimaholo Local Municipality (21)
- And, here in Matjhabeng Local Municipality with 20 Artisan trainees.

More Departments and Municipalities have shown interest in the initiative of implementing Artisan Development Programme. In the new financial year, the programme will be expanded to the following public bodies:

- Department of Agriculture (10)
- Department of Social Development (10); and
- Phumelela Local Municipality 20).

We continue to explore more opportunities for our unemployed youth through the Expanded Public Works Programme; in keeping up with this commitment, the Department has now established a Security Learnership Programme which aims at improving safety and security of officials in public buildings.

This programme aims at attracting unemployed youth and enrol them to accredited training with the objective of equipping them to become qualified Security Officers. The programme will target thirty-five (35) unemployed youth in Bloemfontein and is anticipated to expand in other regions where there are government facilities and reach at least one hundred (100) participants by end of the financial year.

All the potential participants are subjected to security vetting prior recruitment while priority is given to participants who are part of our unemployed database which was advertised in March 2024 for interested communities provincially.



Moving to the provincial outlook of EPWP, in line with the three priorities of the 7th administration of government, job creation remains priority number one for our province. The Expanded

Public Works Programme as part of Public Employment Programmes committed a five-year target of creating five (5) million work opportunities nationally. At the beginning of the financial year, we stated our contribution towards this target based on the resources available for both provincial departments and local municipalities. This target remains unchanged at 171 709 for the same five-year period (2024/25 - 2028/29).

We further committed on behalf of all three spheres government within the province an annual target of creating 50 000 work opportunities. The performance against this target is as follows:

To-date, Provincial Departments created 15 902, Municipalities created 9 17, National Departments have contributed by 2 759 work opportunities, Community Work Programme implemented by CoGTA contributed 17 850 while Independent Development Trust (IDT) as the non-state entity created 2 717. This takes the tally of entire EPWP in the province to **48 399 work opportunities** created through Public Employment Programmes.

As the political champion of EPWP in the province, I personally enlist the oversight assistance of MECs and Executive Mayors to ensure that our province achieve its EPWP targets per individual institution. This will ensure that Free State is repositioned nationally on job creation efforts since the province is one of the most affected by unemployment nationally.

Lastly, **Honourable Speaker**, our budget vote is presented against the backdrop of the global economic crisis which affect South Africa in a very direct way because of the dependent integration of South Africa's economy into the global economy. Our country's economy continues to face stagnation, unemployment, poverty and inequality continues, also the budget is shrinking.

It is true, **Honorable Speaker**, as Karl Marx famously put it more than a Century ago, that ***“Men make their own history but not in the circumstances of their own choosing”***. In this era, no administration can choose the circumstances in which it must govern.

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET VOTE

2026



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FREE STATE PROVINCE

Over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, the Department's allocation declines from **R2.409 billion** in 2025/26 to **R2.379 billion** in 2026/27, which is a year-on-year reduction of **1.21%**. The allocation to each of the Departmental programme for the 2025/2026 is as follows:

- **Programme 1: Administration** **R 206.515m**
- **Programme 2: Public Works and Infrastructure** **R 2.101 377b**
- **Programme 3: EPWP** **R 71.578m**



CONCLUSION

Honourable Speaker

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Premier for her continued leadership of the provincial government and for always being available to provide the necessary support and advice whenever required, albeit under trying demands of her work schedule.

I must also thank my colleagues in the Executive Council for their invaluable advice, team-spirit and support.

I am duty bound to thank all the honourable members of the Legislature and in particular the Chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committee of Public Works and Infrastructure, Roads, Transport and Human Settlement for their constructive and progressive oversight role.

I will forever be indebted to the organisation that deployed me to do this work for the people of the Free State and South Africa in general. I therefore take this moment to honour the African National Congress for their continued guidance and the mandate I am entrusted with.

Finally, I would like to thank my private office, my close protectors and the staff of the Department under the sterling leadership of the Head of Department Ntate Molato Tshabalala.

Most importantly, I must pass special gratitude to my beloved partner, my children and my entire family whom I couldn't have made it thus far without their love and support.

I hereby table the Budget Vote for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for the 2026/27 financial year.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members of the house

I thank you.

K.D Mance