

*Thursday, 16 February 2023]*

No 1 - 2023] FIFTH SESSION, SIXTH PARLIAMENT

# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

-----

THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2023

1. The House met at 10:45.
2. The Speaker took the Chair and requested Ms Primrose Noxolo Mahote to render the National Anthem of the Republic of South Africa.
3. The Speaker read the prayer.

[10:47] The Speaker announced that due to the resignation of Mr M Mngqasela, a vacancy occurred in the representation of the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. This vacancy has been filled by the nomination of Mr G Pretorius with effect from 15 December 2022, and due to the resignation of Mr M Xego and Ms N Makamba-Botya, two vacancies occurred in the representation of the EFF party in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. These vacancies has since been filled by the nomination of Mr T Klaas and Ms A Cassiem with effect from 3 February 2023 and that the Members had taken the oath in the Speaker's office.

4. [14:48] The Speaker made a general announcement regarding the sitting of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament in accordance with Rule 1A of the Standing Rules pertaining to Members in remote attendance by electronic means.
5. [10:50] The Speaker welcomed all guest to the Premier's State of the Province Address.
6. [10:56] The Premier delivered his State of the Province Address, as follows:
7. The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, and perhaps also allow me to congratulate you on your position as elected last year, my first opportunity in this House. Hon members of my Cabinet, hon Leader of the Opposition, and I see we have another hon Leader of the National House Opposition, welcome. To the members of this House, welcome, and specifically we

have new members elected to this House, I want to say to you, welcome to this House!

I want to say to the special guests that are gathered here from our international colleagues, business colleagues, to Mayors, it is really nice to see you here in our Parliament. Most importantly, I want to say to the citizens of the Western Cape, I actually address you today.

It is my honour to present to you the 2023 State of the Province Address. Speaker, it is actually good to be back in this Parliament. A year ago we were still in the grips of the COVID-19. Remember, we were still dealing with red lists, new omicron variants and all that went with fighting this pandemic.

It really has been a tough year of recovery since then. So many of us lost loved ones, so many of us lost jobs, businesses and livelihoods. In our own caucus, Speaker, we sadly lost our Chief Whip, Lorraine Botha, may her soul rest in peace.

Speaker, also in the last year the imperialist and colonising Russia invaded the Ukraine. This illegal senseless war led to a massive loss of life and has driven an energy crisis in Europe and massive food inflation even here on the other side of the world.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, allow me to also reflect on the terrible earthquake that took place last week in Turkey and Syria. We send our condolences to all the people of the region.

The PREMIER: Exactly as I said, Turkey.

Hon Speaker, in 1963 Martin Luther King Junior said, and I quote:

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.”

Hon Speaker, I feel that fierce urgency of now every time I speak to a citizen, a small business owner or a public servant. We are in desperate need of urgent action today for tomorrow.

As the Government of the Western Cape we are delivering a clear difference for our residents now, not confusion and platitudes, but recognisable, tangible action.

I am proud to be the Premier of this province, despite what we are all going through. Everywhere I go I see people taking action: citizens stepping up; entrepreneurs finding growth opportunities and volunteering. I see volunteers looking after those that are less fortunate in our province. Everybody is hustling.

Those of you who had driven here today would have noticed that even the traffic is back and as a government we recognise our important role in creating an environment where we all can thrive and take action.

The PREMIER: That is why I am gripped with the fierce urgency of now, not only for this province, but for all of South Africa. Hon

Speaker, in this province we must continue to work hard in showcasing the difference between good governance and failure. We are the Cape of Good Hope, the Cape of Opportunity; South Africa's only hope for a better future.

Hon Speaker, this starts with how we are approaching the energy crisis which, Speaker, is in stark ...

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, I will say again, this starts with how we are approaching the energy crisis, which is in stark contrast to the National Government's approach.

The National Government started tackling loadshedding in 2008, 5 500 days ago. As I said in the National Assembly earlier this week, 3 000 days ago the President was appointed to solve this problem, to head up the War Room and I heard the hon member there say not one megawatt. Well, that is exactly true. The President ...

The PREMIER: ... has not delivered one more megawatt .

Not one more. In actual fact we have less megawatts in the system today than we had 3 000 days ago.

What we have also, hon Speaker, what we have also now got is three Ministers who are responsible to get us out of this crisis, but not only three Ministers, the disaster has taken those three Ministers and put another super Minister in charge over and above them.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, we also have a Crisis Committee, who has not got a clear plan on the table. In the plan they say, "We are going to put up to 8 000 megawatts into the system this year. There is no clear data showing those 8 000 megawatts. In actual fact if you interrogate those 8 000 megawatts, hon Speaker,

The PREMIER: Thank you, hon Speaker. I will remember that tomorrow when the hon member Sayed is addressing this House.

Hon Speaker, we also now have a state of disaster and I heard that jibe about the state of disaster ...

The PREMIER: ... and we did ask for it.

The PREMIER: A ringfenced state of disaster that made it for electricity now only. We now have a broad state of disaster, and you know the citizens of this country when they heard the word "disaster" or "a state of disaster", they think of rampant looting.

I think is this an election funding tool? Is this an election funding tool brought to you by the ruling party?

What we also see is increasing political centralisation.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The last thing I want to say is that I still do not see any real urgency and that really bothers me.

Hon Speaker, I also want to say to the President from this House that I

really hope that the National Assembly puts in place transparency and accountability during this disaster.

I also want to say to this House that we need to follow what we followed during COVID-19 and I hope that we also appoint an ad hoc committee like we did before, that has true oversight of anything that happens in this province around the disaster and fixing our energy system. That we once again table all money spent to this committee, as well as publicly to the citizens of our province.

Hon Speaker, we in this province will tackle the energy crisis like we tackled COVID-19, with a similar transparency, determination, innovation and grit.

I am still filled with the immense pride when I think of how we tackled that pandemic. I think of the Hospital of Hope built in just six weeks, I think of medicine deliveries to people's homes, more than 2 million people's home deliveries received medicines. I think of the drive-thru vaccine sites, the high pressure nasal oxygen, I think of the dashboards, I think of the management of the full pandemic and I stand here thinking back on that time with pride.

Hon Speaker, the provision of electricity is not a Provincial Government mandate, but we will not neglect our duty to make sure that we serve our citizens in this regard.

Since last year we have been formulating and actioning our own plan. Last year we had an energy bosberaad, we had energy workshops with

not only our own internal officials, but specialists, university professors. We formed the Western Cape Energy Council.

At the start of this year Alwie Lester was appointed to – and I think he is here somewhere, there he is, thank you, Alwie. Alwie Lester was appointed to lead our council. It is really nice to be able to work with someone who has the expertise and knowledge of energy here in the Western Cape.

We set up short-term in my emergency responses. We are busy putting forward a provincial IRP for short emergency term actions for medium-term and longer-term energy resilience and independence in this province.

Where the lights go out we are stepping in to ensure that the most basic needs of our citizens are met and those basic needs, hon Speaker, I think can be covered in water, WiFi or connectivity and communication, and health services. Those are the basic needs you need to get right when the power goes down and then of course you build layer upon layer.

So first of all, hon Speaker, when it comes to water. You would have already seen this Government making an adjustment of R89 million [Inaudible] available to local authorities to make sure that we can fund generators to keep water flowing, whether it is water reticulation, water pumping, filling up reservoirs or also making sure that sewerage systems work. Water is critical. You cannot have the lights go out and the water fail the citizens.

And I hear that mumbling about planning. This has got nothing to do with planning. This is actually what we have done. [Inaudible] We did it. We did it.

Hon Speaker I want to say to Minister Bredell and Minister Wenger, to our Treasury and Local Government teams and our disaster team, thank you. This whole festive season, in actual fact since the Level 4 to 6 really hit us last year, these teams have been out on the ground making sure that we are mitigating risk. I want to thank them on behalf of the citizens across this province for working through the season and making sure that we could keep water flowing.

Then I want to speak about what I said is connectivity communications. I remember last year when we had a power failure in the City, it was very evident that very quickly cellphone towers would go down and we would lose basic communications. I want to welcome a meeting that I had this week with the CEO of Vodacom. He is also the chairman of the Association of Communications and Technology Grouping in South Africa that brings all of the telcos together. We had a discussion on how we can mitigate risk, not only Government connectivity, but how can the private sector also help us make sure that our citizens remain connected when we get into blackout stages. I really want to thank the private sector for helping us in this regard. They have again already met with our disaster management team, making sure that we can keep connected even when we get to Levels 4 and 5.

The PREMIER: And hopefully not beyond.

The PREMIER: It is also critical during this time because we know that loadshedding is going to last at least the whole year. Eskom reporting last year told us the loadshedding this year was going to be worse than last year. It was true, it is much worse and at the same time we also need to make sure that not only emergency connectivity happens, but that our learners can keep their homework and their studies going.

The PREMIER: I will address that shortly.

The PREMIER: We need to know that small businesses can keep operating because the one thing that we do know is these extended blackouts and this loadshedding are really hurting the citizens of our province.

Hon Speaker, when it comes to communication, what I will also do is to keep the citizens updated on our Energy Council and what we are busy doing. I will re-enact our digicons every week so that we can actually bring in the specialists, we can bring in the teams that are busy finding solutions for this province.

Hon Speaker, I have also requested the Provincial Treasury to allocate around R1 billion for us to respond to this energy crisis in the upcoming three year budget cycle. Hon Speaker

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker ...

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, that budget that I have requested, this is proposed to cover initial

expenditure to make sure that we keep Government services running while loadshedding is happening; to make sure that we secure extra diesel to look after our power plants. We do not want to have a power failure when one of our citizens are in ICU or perhaps, on an operating theatre, anywhere where essential services are being delivered to the citizens of this province.

We also want to be able to help buffer schools from loadshedding. Our children's education must come first. We will also be asking for funding to provide poorer households with what I call 'power packs'. You know, in this country last year, citizens spent R30-billion on inverters and on those plugs to prevent surges destroying their appliances: R30-billion! But there are poor people in this province who suffer the most when loadshedding comes along and we need to make sure that those households are looked after.

How do we make sure that those households with matric students can still study while there is loadshedding happening? We know that moms have to wake up an hour or two earlier in the morning, in the darkness, to be able to prepare the family for the school day and the workday ahead. We know that we must make sure that we protect the most vulnerable in our society. We must also make sure that we use this funding to help SMMEs with alternative energy options and support. In all things 'energy', we are gripped by the fierce urgency of now, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, it is also my pleasure to welcome an individual here today

in our gallery, Akhona Winisi. There he is. Akhona Winisi is a lecturer at False Bay College in West Lake here in Cape Town. Some of you will remember that the Department of Economic Development came up with a skills training plan for ‘solar heroes’. These are specialists who are going to be installing solar panels, servicing solar panels, and making sure that the solar panel industry and the protection of much of the people of our province through solar generation, can have the right skills to make sure that businesses can flourish and that we can invest and make sure that this industry flourishes.

So, I want to say thank you to Akhona for setting up the curriculum, for having a look at exactly the kind of skills that we need; create opportunities for young people to not only play a part but play a really important part in helping us in the province, mitigate this massive risk of loadshedding going forward.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, municipal energy resilience is also a major programme in our Department of Economic Development and Economic Opportunities. That programme links across all of our municipalities in this province and I want to specifically thank them, but also thank the Mayors that are here today. They have come from far and wide. I want to thank you and through you, your officials that are not only just waiting, they are stepping up to make a difference in all of our municipalities across this province where loadshedding is having such a negative impact.

You know that in this Government, for many years we have been

working on the green economy. We set up GreenCape, which I am so proud of now, which plays a role not only in South Africa, not only advising the hon President in his speech, but internationally as well. We also rolled out tariff processes for our municipalities. Our MER programme has been there supporting this transition. They have been there through the energy game changer which initially, with the SSEG and the 1-megawatt space saw around 3 000 independent power producers at about 135 extra megawatts, hon Leader of the Opposition

The PREMIER: ...in our energy system.

The PREMIER: But you know what? That number has grown exponentially. The City already has 60 000 energy producers in the City. These are businesses and families who have got solar panels on their roofs. The MER programme has approved and is busy with municipal applications for 6 756 PV programmes or installations across our municipalities, another 197 megawatts.

Hon Speaker, I also want to say that the Mayors that are here today and the programmes that are running across our province, the action that is already taking place in our province, I am really proud of. The City of Cape Town and the Mayor sitting there, he has already announced 'cash for power'. He will pay cash to citizens and businesses that help us get out of this mess.

The PREMIER: The City, as we know already, can mitigate two levels of loadshedding, already making a massive difference to the citizens just here in this region. They have also allocated R132-million to extra

diesel and R25-million to diesel storage. They have already put 62 generators on water pumps, 26 generators on water pump stations, 110 generators on sewerage pumps. They have also announced and are busy with 70 megawatts of their own solar PV plants. They have already gone out to tender for a further 200 megawatts of power. That tender system has closed, and they are busy with due diligence.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: How much will it cost?

The PREMIER: For dispatchable power, 500 megawatts will be going out again in the City within the next month. [Interjections.] More than half of their traffic lights and intersections have got battery systems as backups. This is Local Government really stepping up and making a difference to the citizens of this province.

In George, for example, they are already busy with the wheeling framework, and they are busy with the pilot trading platform that once the proof of concept is finished, it will be able to be rolled out.

The PREMIER: ...across other municipalities.

The PREMIER: In Mossel Bay, the private sector are busy with the Municipality looking at waste to energy. They are also looking – if you drive past Mossel Bay and you see that flame from Mossgas – they are having a look at how they can even harness the energy coming out of that flame for electricity.

The PREMIER: I am also very happy that we have seen the allocation of

3 000 megawatts of gas to energy in Mossel Bay, that was held back for so long from this province. We will work with the National Government to make sure that we can land those megawatts into our system as quickly as possible.

Stellenbosch is about to go out with its own IPP tenders for energy. Saldanha Bay is playing a major role in the green transition, green hydrogen and the corridor – I will say a bit more about that just now – but also the role that they play in the Freeport of Saldanha, the industrial area there plays, linking it to green steel and the potential of the ArcelorMittal plant now getting into markets in Europe. These, amongst other things, are the actions that our municipalities are taking to mitigate our citizens from this loadshedding risk that we all feel every single day.

But do you know what, hon Speaker, all of these budgets, the diesel that they are procuring, has to come from service delivery and that is the real tragedy. We are stepping up to make the difference, but we have to take the money from other things because ...

The PREMIER: ...of the failure of Eskom or the failure to rectify the system of energy provision in South Africa after so many years.

Hon Speaker, while this Province is showing the fierce urgency of now and putting more megawatts on the grid, the National Government is not adding a single megawatt. In actual fact, less megawatts today that we had 3,000 days ago. All that they are adding is more bureaucracy, more Ministers, and slowing down the delivery system in our country.

The Western Cape Government is on a drive to increase energy resilience to highlight the immense potential of the power generation sector, specifically the green economy as in being able to stimulate growth, attract investment and create employment. In the last ten years, hon Speaker, the green economy sector attracted nearly R18-billion in foreign direct investment in this province. This confirms the huge potential of our province's green economy going forward and how a continued focus on strengthening our energy resilience will not only relieve pressure created by the mass power cuts, but also contribute more investment and economic growth. This is a burgeoning market, one which we will harness to the fullest potential.

Hon Speaker, we also have a major responsibility as a province with regards to the Just Energy Transition and our role that we play on the planet, making sure that we are tackling climate change, understanding the pressure on us, understanding the pressure that our system currently is under, where coal power is providing some power to our agri-sector. But by 2030, if we have not enabled more and more green energy, that is going to affect our ability to sell our products, agricultural and agri-processed products, to say the least, into those global markets. Therefore, we take this very, very seriously.

I also want to say that a next area that we have to target is our Energy Council, our training systems for new skills, are we able to make sure that our grid is invested in, serviced and maintained and not only the national grid in this province, the Eskom grid, but also our Local

Government grids. I really believe that we need to make sure that just as we build solar installer skills programmes, we need to be doing exactly the same thing on high voltage energy specialists, on people that are going to be able to deal with the expansion of our grid system. At the moment there are seven and half gigawatts of power that is a potential in South Africa, of green renewable energy, but it cannot enter the grid system because the grid system has not been invested in or upgraded. We have to make sure that we are playing our part there.

Hon Speaker, last year post my engagement in the EU, we came back to this Province, and signed an agreement with our neighbouring province. Premier Zama Saul and I made sure that both our provinces have got green hydrogen strategies – the only two provinces in South Africa – and we signed an agreement to work together to make sure that we play our part in the Just Energy Transition, that we use the huge potential of green hydrogen demand for export to Europe as a pool factor of changing our green energy systems in our province, fixing our problem but at the same time, creating massive investment opportunities.

We then had the privilege of hosting the National Green Hydrogen Summit here and it was really exciting to see the number of international companies really interested in what we are doing and the effect that that is going to have on the Saldanha Bay Freeport. I have spoken already about how we are going to start producing green steel into the future. These are really exciting programmes for us here in the region and not only for South Africa, for the provinces of the Western Cape and the Northern Cape, but Namibia, too, engaging to build a green hydrogen

corridor here in the southern part of Africa that will be able to compete and make sure that we play a part in the global demand of green hydrogen going forward.

We also have the work being done at the moment in the Atlantis green economic zone – I was just there the other day – massive opportunities of attracting more and more investment into our region. But also, I think, that when we are going out to tender now for more energy coming into the system, we can use our own land that we have got there right next to the Ankerlig Power Station and how we can enable other energy producers. I think this will fit in nicely with the hon Mayor's call for dispatchable power.

Speaker, this last year – moving from a green-economy energy – now to Education. This last year our education community rolled up its sleeves and dug deep to claw back the time lost in class and expand the province's schooling environment. Once more, our investment in infrastructure has proved to be essential.

Last year, I joined the Minister of Education, Minister Maynier, on his Rapid Build Programme. It was unbelievably impressive. He and I went to Delft where we walked around a physical school that had been in construction for only 60 days; 60 days later – it was not foundations, they were finishing off the ceilings and the WiFi connectivity inside the roof. They were doing the paving outside, a school for 500 learners with new innovation and technology and the ability to use the school hall differently, beam out education to citizens around the region. That was

not the only school, Speaker. The Rapid Build was building many schools across this province. In actual fact, this year, this financial year, the target is 842 new classrooms, of which 662 classrooms have already been delivered, the rest between now and the end of the financial year in March.

Speaker, not only building classrooms and building schools four times faster than we have ever done so before, this Department has added more teachers than we have ever added before, 1 143 additional teachers added to the system.

The PREMIER: 1 143 additional teachers in the system, Speaker, and going forward this year, they are going to top that up again by another 430. In years gone by we were lucky if we had 300 to 500 new educators coming into the system every year. This has gone way beyond, Minister, well done, and thank you very much.

The PREMIER: Speaker, I also want to thank all of the officials, the Government partners, the contractors, the private sector who stepped in, the school staff for all of your hard work to bring this to reality.

The speed and quality of work is inspiring, and I am really glad it has already been applauded. Speaker, every year for the last several years, this province has had to accommodate nearly 20 000 additional learners from other provinces every single year.

The PREMIER: This is never easy...

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier...

The PREMIER: It takes tremendous resources.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. Speaker, I am really impressed with the Department on how they are able to deal with not only building these extra classrooms but making sure that we are placing learners. They have already placed – listen to this number. They will replace 120 000 unique Grade 1 and Grade 8 learners in this province and only 1 400 learners, as I stand here today, still need to be placed and these learners are coming to this province and have only arrived in January and February this year.

The PREMIER: Speaker...

The PREMIER: Speaker, so once again, I congratulate this Department going above and beyond. These numbers are truly remarkable. Speaker, I have already asked him my energy-ask, that we have extra funding for Education to keep the lights on, but, I must say, and we all know that the loadshedding crisis impacts specifically our schools terribly. The Western Cape Education Department is really working hard to keep the lights on. So far, there are 41 schools that have entered into agreements with eight companies to install solar power solutions. In addition to this, the Department is helping schools replace traditional light fittings. 25 schools have received funding for this to fit LED light systems. The Department is also investigating installing solar PV panels on any new school that we build and on any upgrade or replacement.

Speaker, I must also say that despite the many challenges over the last

year or should I say over the last few years, I am so proud of the matric class of 2022. Our pass rate increased to at 81,4%, while at the same time we achieved a retention rate and this is a critical number, a retention rate of nearly 70% resulting in 49 102 candidates passing matric this year. I would also like to congratulate and welcome the top achievers. I want to say that the top achievers in this province, Kelly Prowse from Rustenburg Girls High School was recognised as the top candidate in the entire country. Simone Louw from Bloemhof High School, also right up there. Kenneth Janson from Hoër Jongenskool Paarl, Athenkosi Khonzani, he is from the Centre of Science and Technology, Jason de Villiers from Rondebosch High. These are the absolute top performers in our education system and we congratulate them. Thank you, hon Leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER: Speaker, the top overall candidate in the country has come from the Western Cape in five of the past six years, and the top candidate in mathematics has come from our province in the past four years, every year.

The PREMIER: We are very proud of all our learners, many of whom have overcome all odds to achieve their goals. Speaker, among them is a marvellous learner. Luca Crouse, who is here today, who sits up there in the gallery. Speaker, Luca has or is living with apraxia of speech, a speech sound condition that prevents him from communicating verbally. He also needs help with moving his hands and a facilitator had to help him to write his exams. Sometimes he would sit for up to six hours to finish an exam. Speaker, Luca achieved 82% in this matric.

The PREMIER: Luca gives us inspiration. Tackling challenges that we have, after listening to that, you know, we can tackle just about anything. Speaker, I now need to move to jobs.

While we celebrate the successes of our matriculants, it is essential that they are able to enter a thriving economy filled with multiple job opportunities.

Our country's energy woes also impact this key priority of our Government. Our province's economic growth is muted. Growth projections for this year is 0,5%. This is linked to rolling blackouts, bad national policy decisions and global pressures. I am encouraged through the incredible tourism season that this province has just experienced. Cape Town International Airport recorded over 266 000 international passengers and just short of 800 000 domestic passengers coming through that port. Speaker, this brought our overall passenger numbers coming through the airport to just over seven million this year. Our hotel occupancy in the Western Cape was also up on pre-pandemic numbers. Our recovery this year will be further augmented by a calendar full of events such as we are experiencing in our region right now. The Women's Cricket World Cup. Next week, the world's Battery Heads will all be here for the Formula E, the Cape Town Cycle Tour. Of course, I must mention something about cycling, Speaker, and maybe one day the Epic also taken place. The Netball World Cup, I was reading today that there's the World Championship Ice Hockey taking place here in the City. There is the Cape Town Carnival to come. There is our rural towns

with Jazz Festivals, with Literary and Art Festivals. The Conventions and Indabas are also back. We have just had the Mining Indaba and the CTICC was bursting at the seams. Looking at our conferencing industry at their forward bookings, it really, really bodes well for economic recovery.

Speaker, recovery also comes through investment, and not only the Cape Town International investor investment with all of those passengers I have just spoken about, I saw in the audience here some investors that are going to be investing in a second airport here in Cape Town, the new Cape Winelands Airport. These are exciting things where people are prepared to dig deep, fund new projects that are going to make big differences to the economy going forward. The Amazon head office now really getting going, BPO and not only in the city, it is so nice to see BPO investing in Mitchells Plain, building call centres in Mitchells Plain, taking jobs closer to the people.

I must celebrate an entrepreneur, Marlon Parker, here, because our first Thursday took place in Mitchells Plain at his new office that he has built in that suburb, an unbelievable beacon of hope for people when a world class entrepreneur who operates in 23 or 24 countries around the world, being involved in training hundreds of thousands of people, helping hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs and businesses with skills, set up shop back here at home in Mitchells Plain, really exciting.

On Saturday, I will be joining another entrepreneur who we are very proud of, Luvuyo Rani, someone who has really been recognised by the

World Economic Forum as a social entrepreneur, someone who started here in Khayelitsha, but built businesses across South Africa.

I think of the Ashley Uys' of the world who really, prior to COVID-19, produced test kits, but he was the one during the pandemic that came up with a 15-second COVID-test kit and is now working with MIT and companies in the US building electronic and data-driven test kits for the health sector.

I think of the informal traders, and I am really happy that Rashida Mulla is here today, she is the person that really fights for our informal traders.

I know that sometimes I do not get to answer my phone every time, but I want to celebrate you and the passion that you drive the informal sector here in this region. We are accompanied by the Business Chambers, by Wesgro, by entrepreneurs. I believe that one of our jam manufacturers are here that takes agri-processing to market. It really is exciting, and an exciting time for business entrepreneurs and opportunity. But, you know, Speaker, when you come out of a pandemic or a crisis, you cannot just carry on and let the same old same old happen. So I want to say to Minister Wenger, thank you very much for all the work that you have put into our growth-for-jobs strategy, with a very short timeframe, dedication from our officials, bringing in other specialists from outside and producing an amazing document with some really nice ambitious goals for us as a region.

The PREMIER: This comprehensive ambitious goal for the Western Cape is to grow the provincial economy between 4% and 6% by 2035.

The goal is to fuel and stimulate economic growth so that we achieve or we become a R1 trillion Provincial GDP Economy by 2035. This would require an annual growth rate of 3,8% and it will also need or translate into in excess of another 600 000 jobs. It is inspired by a vision of achieving an economy that is sustainable and diverse. A key component of the strategy is enabling private-sector led growth and the work of businesses, entrepreneurs, informal traders, whose competitiveness and job creation ability are dependent upon the services that we provide. I would also like to say also dependent on sometimes us just getting out of the way.

We are blessed with an abundance of talent that is well positioned to identify economic opportunities in this province. The urgency with which we need to address unemployment is real and need strong collaboration. We are not working in isolation or in silos. We are working together.

Speaker, in South Africa, we have the highest youth unemployment rate in the world and so we must be especially concerned about our youth, about young people and job opportunities for young people. If a young person loses hope in finding a job, the consequences are usually dire and often lead to a life of crime. There we must therefore say to residents, especially the youth, those opportunities, we must make sure that we are looking at the most vulnerable in our society and here I would like to speak to some of the interventions by our Social Development Department. There we are busy bolstering our Safety Plan with a

development from social development to track and assist 1 800 families with support and we will also have over 3 000 parents, or 3 000 parents receiving parenting programs. I have seen it myself. It is really an amazing program, watching the YeBo-naires busy delivering help and training to young parents in our region. We will also look for partnerships and...

The PREMIER: Thank you very much.

We are also through our partnerships with the YES programme setting an initial target for 2023 of a further 3 000 work opportunities. This is how young people get opportunities and will add to our already 10 000 first work and youth service opportunities created in this Government over the last few years.

We are helping young people find and explore their passions through support of our After Schools Programme and there, Minister Marais, thank you very much, this is a great programme that really offers hope to our young people especially in areas that are under pressure.

We engage with passionate young people and are more likely to succeed in all aspects of life after going through this programme. We are committed to ensure every child is able to engage in physical activity, play sport and be creative. These programmes are designed to keep young people off the street and engaged.

Also linked to this programme I am really happy to see that through sports development this Department at present is busy with 739

individuals who are employed across various sub-directorates. These young people are offering sporting codes and are really managing the system across our province.

Another intervention, hon Speaker is the Chrysalis Academy, something that every single person in this province can be super proud of. This is an initiative run by the Police Oversight and Community Safety Department. Thank you, Minister Allen, and those of you who have not had the opportunity to go to a passing-out parade of a class, it is something that you should do. I promise you it will make a difference in your soul when you see those young people, those young men and women, passing out after going through welding programmes, cooking programmes, skills on computers, fitness training. This academy is really making us proud and every intake every three months takes 230 young people from our province and puts them through the system.

No, they did not.

Hon Speaker, the Chrysalis Academy has got a very strong brand and is also rolling out a new trial. They have launched the first ever community-based holistic programme in Atlantis. 26 young Atlantis youths are going to be participating in this programme, they are matriculants, and I am really looking forward to the outcome of this programme because if it works we can see how we can roll it out even further.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, I would like to now move to a part of our economy called agriculture.

Minister Meyer, agriculture. There is no better example of resilience than our farmers. When most other sectors in the economy suffered during the pandemic, agriculture flourished. They made sure that they kept food security in check.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, this agricultural sector in the last two years gave us double digit growth. Well done, Minister. This province's agricultural sector is contributing to our growth and jobs creation. It contributes around 11% to the province's GDP and 55% of South Africa's agricultural exports come from this province.

The Western Cape is blessed with abundant farmland, capable, resilient farming communities, who through rain, drought, heat and cold plough and harvest to keep us fed.

Hon Speaker, I also would like to welcome the opening of an investment into a dam called the Brandvlei Dam. This – yes, yes. Do you know how many years we had to push the Minister of Water Affairs to get the small project up and running? Which makes a massive difference. 5 000 hectares.

The PREMIER: So I would like to say thank you to Minister Bredell for going along to the opening of that dam. It really is great to see finality after long years of hard pushing.

I did hear that the Clanwilliam Dam is back on the table and I welcome

that absolutely. What I do want to say is that we do have an election coming up. We have already had four sod turnings and big fanfares with tents and food to get that Clanwilliam Dam going with nothing happening. No more sod turnings, no more tents and food, no more big fanfare before an election. This time let us just build the dam and if National cannot build the dam, give it to us, give it to our new Infrastructure Department, we will build it.

The PREMIER: Hon Speak, I also want to say that with regards to food security, I am worried. I spoke about the impact on food security because of what is happening in the Ukraine.

Right here loadshedding is having a similar impact and that was part of my letter to the President, not only asking for clarity on what is happening with new energy coming into the system, it was also to raise the alarm.

In this province 180 000 hectares of permanent crops are at risk because we do not have the energy for the irrigation systems. That is R60 billion potential loss, but the big problem is that that just adds to insecurity and food inflation.

We have seen that the maize production in our province where mealies that should be 1,5 metres high right now are 30 centimetres high. Maize is a staple diet, maize inflation price is going to skyrocket. That is going to hit the poorest of the poor.

The cheapest protein around is chicken. We have already seen 10 million

day old chicks die because of loadshedding. There is a massive risk going forward and we already feel it.

Before the loadshedding our Minister of Health in her systems in measurement already shows that malnutrition is an underlying problem when coming to our hospitals.

The Minister of Social Development, you would have seen in the last Adjustment Budget, has got another R25 million to mitigate this risk. This is an ongoing risk and really worries me going forward.

Hon Speaker, and so to supplement our food system Minister Meyer continues to invest in food gardens. The current financial year the Department invested in 2 692 household food gardens, 185 community projects and 28 school food gardens. Our plan the coming year is to support a further 3 000 food gardens and do that year after year. A further 85 community and school food gardens. This is how we also mitigate risk, especially for the poorest of the poor.

The Department will continue investing in our transformation agenda. R119 697 000 was made available in the last year to the CASP programme, supporting emerging farmers, and that was topped up by another R58,9 million to give small producers support.

Hon Speaker, agriculture remains a key for our food security, but it is also a major area where we see huge investment coming into our province. You just have to drive across the province and see how many more areas are covered in nets or new packhouses are being built, and I

really want to thank the sector for the resilience and the confidence that they keep on investing.

Hon Speaker, our province is a construction site. We are creating more jobs in our province through infrastructure development, a critical economic lever, than anywhere else. The Western Cape continues to lead the country in the value of buildings that we have been completed, or that have been completed over the past year.

Hon Speaker, in 2022, 27% more building plans were passed in this province as compared to the previous year. The Western Cape recorded R25 billion worth of completed buildings between January and November last year. This represents 40% of the total value of buildings in South Africa completed over this period. 40% of the total buildings in our whole country.

Between January and August 2022, the value of buildings completed in the Western Cape was R19,6 billion, representing a year-on-year growth of 42,1%, compared to R13,2 billion in Gauteng, with a year-on-year growth of 8,7%. Over the same period, the value of building plans passed in the province totalled R24,29 billion, representing a year-on-year growth of 25,2%. This is compared to the R23,3 billion in Gauteng, which is a negative year-on-year growth of minus 1,9%.

Hon Speaker, citizens are moving to this province. I wonder why.

The PREMIER: No one complains about people moving to this province.

To further attract investment in our province to better enable the private

sector and to help stimulate jobs and create growth, we need to continue investing in infrastructure.

Hon Speaker, we need to develop our towns and cities to meet the demand of our growing population. This province's current population now sits at 7,2 million citizens and we are estimated to grow to 8 million citizens by 2030. However, if I look at the numbers last year and the year before, I am almost certain the 8 million will be reached a year earlier than 2030.

We are under pressure to dramatically expand our province's infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population. As you know this Government has established a dedicated Infrastructure Department and I want to say thank you very much to the officials who are busy with the process of establishing this new department. I am also really happy, I am not sure what time, DG, you sent it to me. It was probably about 5 o'clock this morning when I got the designation from the President. So that is good news.

As we established the Infrastructure Department, the aim is to further prioritize the importance of developing and maintaining critical infrastructure in our province. Here I want to recognise our municipalities as well. I want to recognise the Mayor of Cape Town and say to him thank you for also prioritising infrastructure. There we have seen the City growing infrastructure investment by 110% in the next three years and this year the City of Cape Town's infrastructure spend is now more than the City of Joburg's infrastructure spend. R1 million

more, but it is more and it keeps on growing. Well done, Mayor.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, some key Western Cape infrastructure projects in this province include the upgrading of the refinery interchange on the N7 currently underway. If you drive there now you will see construction happening.

The construction of the bypass linking roads and intersections around Malmesbury. You will see the Stanford to Gansbaai rehabilitation programme. The Calitzdorp to Oudtshoorn rehabilitation programme of district road 1688. This investment as well as the investment in maintenance undertaken through our own road workers team across this province speak to the focus of mainstreaming infrastructure as we have.

Hon Speaker, we always see that photograph of roads entering into our province where you see a line across the road. That is exactly how we visualise infrastructure in our province. A tangible difference.

Let us also talk about other projects. The Cogmanskloof project. I see on the screen is a picture of the Ashton bridge. An award-winning construction. Our teams have won awards for that, the first time on the African continent that a bridge like that, a concrete tied arch bridge has been built separate to the road and moved into place. A construction like that gives our young people in our province hope that they can go and do engineering at our universities and that they will be taken seriously. There is a job for them into the future to design amazing infrastructure.

I also think of the Cogmanskloof project, the road, 2019 and opened last

year, 2022. An amazing project, Minister Simmers, that really shows how important we take connectivity. That road and that bridge sits, Minister Meyer, in an area where the fruit industry is the biggest fruit industry in the Southern Hemisphere. It creates connectivity, it makes sure that we mitigate risk, it better not ever wash away.

Hon Speaker, moving on to social housing infrastructure and there again I want to say that our attempts to build better communities by delivering critical infrastructure and services are under attack from extortion mafias and syndicates.

We now spend as much as R1,5 million a month beefing up security at our construction sites. This is totally unacceptable.

Hon Speaker, the number of housing beneficiaries affected by extortion continues to rise and is currently sitting at about 21 000 residents in our province. Also noting that illegal occupation of sites in our province is taking away opportunities. I think here, Mayor, of the Helen Bowden site, or I think of the Woodstock Hospital site, but also think of our very own Helen Bowden, which are sites which are there to create housing opportunities in the middle of the City and these are occupied illegally and are taking rights away from citizens.

This is where SAPS and other legal systems are failing us. The police cannot and would not act and the courts make it very difficult and sometimes even impossible. I want to thank our partners in the City of Cape Town and its law enforcement agencies and community organisations for taking a stand against these criminal syndicates.

Hon Speaker, I want to also say that in the year ahead the province has committed to creating another 9 395 housing opportunities. These opportunities spread across our province and they are in different programmes. Some of these programmes like "Help Me Buy a Home" initiative, which has growing success, this programme has a target to deliver 2 000 units this year and in actual fact we have surpassed that programme and delivered 2 074.

In August I was privileged to accompany Minister Simmers to the handover of homes in De Hoop in Malmesbury. There it was the first phase of 395 houses. It will eventually have 3 468 homes.

The PREMIER: Construction has commenced at the Goodwood Station initiative consisting of a third of 1 055 units. We have also delivered at social housing level opportunities. I think of Maitland Mews, 204 units; Regent Villas, 60 units; Conradie Park, with 100 units – social housing units in Phase 1 – and the whole of Conradie Park Development will be delivering 3 500 units in total. Infrastructure, hon Speaker, is a huge job creator and I want to thank hon Minister Simmers for leading this portfolio and the Infrastructure team.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, I also want to speak about Health infrastructure. The poet, Virgil, once said:

‘The greatest wealth is health.’

Delivering quality healthcare to our residents is vital to ensure their wellbeing so that they can be active, economic citizens. We are

continually expanding our health service to meet the needs of a growing population. You will have seen hon Minister Mbombo crisscrossing this Province, opening an upgraded clinic in Gansbaai or the new day clinic in Laingsburg. The Observatory Forensic Pathology Institute is just about completed. Phase 1 of the new Emergency Centre at Victoria Hospital has been completed. Two new acute psychiatric wards – and this is really critical, we need more and more psychiatric wards in our system – two new wards have been opened in Hermanus and in Bredasdorp. The new casualty centre at the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital was opened earlier this year and this is also showing an amazing partnership and I must say to the powerful fundraising team at the Red Cross Hospital: they do amazing work.

Hon Speaker, it is not only about clinics and upgrades. We also have to build big hospitals. In the time that I have been in government, we have built a hospital in Mitchells Plain and a hospital in Khayelitsha. We are now

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The PREMIER: The redevelopment of the Tygerberg Hospital – and I want to congratulate the teams who have been really working hard. This is the second biggest hospital in South Africa and the biggest hospital in this Province. And that redevelopment, public-private partnership is well on its way. Thank you very much to the team for getting us there.

I also want to say that the Klipfontein Regional Hospital, which is a crucial mega-project, is now in its planning stage and professional

services are being appointed. This is also really good news, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, on an infrastructure of another sort,

The PREMIER: I want to recognise the HECTIS Programme. This is IT and Tech infrastructure. We knew this role of this product played in fighting COVID-19. You would have seen it on our dashboards. You would have seen it when Dr Cloete was presenting to the PCC or the country. This is a piece of technology that is really giving us unbelievable data. Helping us with the Safety Plan; helping us with trauma; helping us, obviously, in our hospital systems to understand trauma, but also playing its role in violence prevention. Thank you for now rolling it out to 41 of our health facilities. Data and evidence is actually how modern governments need to be making decisions and moving forward.

I also want to say and I spoke of the Violence Prevention and Monitoring and hon Minister Mbombo, thank you very much for the role that you play there. I want to say that Gender-Based Violence and using that data, is really helping us move to a different level.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, I also want to talk about mobility and as we said, the designation came through late last night or I got it very, very early this morning. We have got to make sure that just like any thriving modern society, mobility needs to be tackled head on.

The PREMIER: Without public transport, specifically a passenger rail network, without the passenger rail network in ruins, the Mobility Department has an immense challenge ahead of it to find solutions of

getting public transport back on track.

The PREMIER: Mismanagement, incompetence and crime have driven our public transport system into the ground, instead of forward. Many people, particularly the working class, are hit the hardest by this public transport void.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, I want to say to you that public transport in South Africa is in crisis because of how the National Government treats it. We, between the City, the Province and other municipalities, need to take over the rail service. We need to make sure that we are able to play a much stronger role in rolling out public transport. I am happy to announce that the Mobility Department will now roll out Phase 4 of the Go George project.

Hon Speaker, I also want to say that I really look forward to announcing the new Minister of Mobility early next week.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, while on mobility, I must reflect on the safety on our roads in this last holiday season. This festive season, road fatality stats showed that we had a reduction of 36,7% in fatalities on our roads. That is an unbelievable achievement. And hon Speaker That definitely can Hon Speaker I want to say that I saw that for myself. I attended roadblocks. Hon Minister Meyer, the Acting Minister, was all over the Province on roadblocks, day and night. But I want to say through this hon Minister: I met the new recruits, I met the traffic officers, men and women, who kept our roads safe. I would like to say, hon Minister, we need to really send you a special gratitude on what

they achieved, on making sure that we reduce fatalities and make our roads safe.

Hon Speaker, while talking about safety while talking about safety, I now want to talk about improving Law Enforcement and Safety for our citizens in our Province.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. By making communities safer, we can create an environment where people can realise their potential and flourish, free from fear and becoming another victim of crime. The Western Cape Safety Plan remains our overarching guide to fighting crime. Crime poses a major risk to our Province's prosperity. If people are too afraid to leave their homes to go to work and school, how can we expect progress? How are families and citizens and businesses expected to operate in gang-infested areas where violence is a daily reality. Given the severe under resourcing and hopeless national political leadership of the South African Police Services, the Western Cape Government has had to step in. One of our flagship interventions has been the Law Enforcement Advancement Plan or LEAP.

Hon Speaker, since its inception, LEAP has been a resounding success. The initiative has seen over 1 200 women and men, just like Assistant Chief Jason Hamilton, who is here today – there he is.

The PREMIER: Or just like Principal Inspector Ronel Londt who is also in the House. Thank you very much for being here. I would like to, through you, pass on to every man and woman in the LEAP programme,

I want to say thank you very much for what you are doing to make it safer in our hotspot murder areas in this Province.

I also want to say to the hon Mayor that this only works because of a great partnership between the City and the Province. I also want to say and perhaps here, I must recognise General Phathekile.

The PREMIER: I must recognise General Phathekile, our Provincial Commissioner. Thank you, sir, for being here. Thank you for the partnership.

The PREMIER: I attack the Police management and hon Minister. Hon Speaker, we have seen in the press that one of our police stations had to close in a real hotspot area. This Province will now explore the initiative of opening a LEAP station in one of these areas, one of these hotspot areas, that will offer services to our citizens, but also enable our LEAP officers to use as a base.

The City and Provincial partnership has achieved much, but you know, hon Speaker, I want to tell you about the environment in which these officials work: SAPS and our Law Enforcement officers. I want to tell you about the environment in which they work. I want to say to you why I said to the Leader of the Opposition now: it is not General Phathekile, it is the hon minister and the management that sits in Pretoria that gets it wrong.

The PREMIER: Let me give you some detail Hon Speaker, let me give you some detail.

The PREMIER: Let me give you some detail. Let these citizens these hon members listen. We are not serious. Let us talk about serious. In the Eastern Cape, there were 4 407 murders last year.

The PREMIER: I will get to the Western Cape now 4 407 murders ...

The PREMIER: Sorry, hon Speaker. I get a bit carried away when I think about how many citizens die in our country every year. So hon Speaker, in the Eastern Cape, 4 407 citizens died and that is an increase of 18,7% in murders. In Gauteng, 5 570 citizens died, lost their lives. That is an increase of 18,9%. In KZN, 6 495 citizens lost their lives. That is a murder increase that is a murder increase of 34,6%. The lowest increase of those three provinces

The PREMIER: The lowest increase is 18,7%, nearly 20% increase in murders in the last year alone: 26 000 citizens in our country lost their lives.

The PREMIER: Do you know what, hon Speaker, in Western Cape we lost 4 109 citizens: 4 109 citizens of this Province were murdered last year. But, hon Speaker, that was a 6,8% increase. The only area in the country that is seeing declines in murder in the hotspot areas that we are focusing. The only place in South Africa where murder comes down. They make a lot of noise, but 26 000 people were murdered in this country on Bheki Cele's watch and what does he do about it? Nothing! That is why we have to have a change.

The PREMIER: That is why we have to have a change.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, I want to reflect on some of those areas. Let us first think about Nyanga, which is no longer the murder capital of South Africa. In actual fact, the Western Cape is no longer the murder capital by population of South Africa. That has changed. It has moved to other provinces, but in this Province because of this intervention because of this intervention, we have results like Mfuleni with a minus 32,3%. A reduction of 32% in murders. Kraaifontein down by 15,6%; Gugulethu down by 16,2%, Khayelitsha down by 9,4%, Harare down by 3,6%. Hon Speaker, that speaks volumes.

The PREMIER: Yes! Yes! The Law Enforcement officers along with SAPS, working together, bringing down the murder rate. The only place in South Africa.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, that budget that I have requested, this is proposed to cover initial expenditure to make sure that we keep government services running while loadshedding is happening; to make sure that we secure extra diesel to look after our power plants. We do not want to have a power failure when one of our citizens are in ICU or perhaps, on an operating theatre, anywhere where essential services are being delivered to the citizens of this Province.

We also want to be able to help buffer schools from loadshedding. Our children's education must come first. We will also be asking for funding to provide poorer households with what I call 'power packs'. You know,

in this country last year, citizens spent R30-billion on inverters and on those plugs to prevent surges destroying their appliances: R30-billion! But there are poor people in this Province who suffer the most when loadshedding comes along and we need to make sure that those households are looked after.

How do we make sure that those households with matric students can still study while there is loadshedding happening? We know that moms have to wake up an hour or two earlier in the morning, in the darkness, to be able to prepare the family for the school day and the workday ahead. We know that we must make sure that we protect the most vulnerable in our society. We must also make sure that we use this funding to help SMMEs with alternative energy options and support. In all things 'energy', we are gripped by the fierce urgency of now, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, it is also my pleasure to welcome an individual here today in our gallery, Akhona Winisi. There he is. Akhona Winisi is a lecturer at False Bay College in West Lake here in Cape Town. Some of you will remember that the Department of Economic Development came up with a skills training plan for 'solar heroes'. These are specialists who are going to be installing solar panels, servicing solar panels, and making sure that the solar panel industry and the protection of much of the people of our Province through solar generation, can have the right skills to make sure that businesses can flourish and that we can invest and make sure that this industry flourishes.

So, I want to say thank you to Akhona for setting up the curriculum, for having a look at exactly the kind of skills that we need; create opportunities for young people to not only play a part but play a really important part in helping us in the Province, mitigate this massive risk of loadshedding going forward.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker municipal energy resilience is also a major programme in our Department of Economic Development and Economic Opportunities. That programme links across all of our municipalities in this Province and I want to specifically thank them, but also thank the Mayors that are here today. They have come from far and wide. I want to thank you and through you, your officials that are not only just waiting, they are stepping up to make a difference in all of our municipalities across this Province where loadshedding is having such a negative impact.

You know that in this Government, for many years we have been working on the green economy. We set up GreenCape, which I am so proud of now, which plays a role not only in South Africa, not only advising the hon President in his speech, but internationally as well. We also rolled out tariff processes for our municipalities. Our MER programme has been there supporting this transition. They have been there through the energy game changer which initially, with the SSEG and the 1-megawatt space saw around 3 000 independent power producers at about 135 extra megawatts, hon Leader of the Opposition

The PREMIER: ...in our energy system.

The PREMIER: But you know what? That number has grown exponentially. The City already has 60 000 energy producers in the City. These are businesses and families who have got solar panels on their rooves. The MER programme has approved and is busy with municipal applications for 6 756 PV programmes or installations across our municipalities, another 197 megawatts.

Hon Speaker, I also want to say that the Mayors that are here today and the programmes that are running across our Province, the action that is already taking place in our Province, I am really proud of. The City of Cape Town and the Mayor sitting there, he has already announced ‘cash for power’. He will pay cash to citizens and businesses that help us get out of this mess.

The PREMIER: The City, as we know already, can mitigate two levels of loadshedding, already making a massive difference to the citizens just here in this region. They have also allocated R132-million to extra diesel and R25-million to diesel storage. They have already put 62 generators on water pumps, 26 generators on water pump stations, 110 generators on sewerage pumps. They have also announced and are busy with 70 megawatts of their own solar PV plants. They have already gone out to tender for a further 200 megawatts of power. That tender system has closed, and they are busy with due diligence.

The PREMIER: For dispatchable power, 500 megawatts will be going out again in the City within the next month. More than half of their traffic lights and intersections have got battery systems as backups.

This is local government really stepping up and making a difference to the citizens of this Province.

In George, for example, they are already busy with the wheeling framework, and they are busy with the pilot trading platform that once the proof of concept is finished, it will be able to be rolled out across other municipalities.

The PREMIER: In Mossel Bay, the private sector are busy with the Municipality looking at waste to energy. They are also looking – if you drive past Mossel Bay and you see that flame from Mossgas – they are having a look at how they can even harness the energy coming out of that flame for electricity.

The PREMIER: I am also very happy that we have seen the allocation of 3 000 megawatts of gas to energy in Mossel Bay, that was held back for so long from this Province. We will work with the National Government to make sure that we can land those megawatts into our system as quickly as possible.

Stellenbosch is about to go out with its own IPP tenders for energy. Saldanha Bay is playing a major role in the green transition, green hydrogen and the corridor – I will say a bit more about that just now – but also the role that they play in the Freeport of Saldanha, the industrial area there plays, linking it to green steel and the potential of the ArcelorMittal plant now getting into markets in Europe. These, amongst other things, are the actions that our municipalities are taking to mitigate our citizens from this loadshedding risk that we all feel

every single day.

But do you know what, hon Speaker, all of these budgets, the diesel that they are procuring, has to come from service delivery and that is the real tragedy. We are stepping up to make the difference, but we have to take the money from other things because of the failure of Eskom or the failure to rectify the system of energy provision in South Africa after so many years.

Hon Speaker, while this Province is showing the fierce urgency of now and putting more megawatts on the grid, the National Government is not adding a single megawatt. In actual fact, less megawatts today that we had 3,000 days ago. All that they are adding is more bureaucracy, more Ministers, and slowing down the delivery system in our country.

The Western Cape Government is on a drive to increase energy resilience to highlight the immense potential of the power generation sector, specifically the green economy as in being able to stimulate growth, attract investment and create employment. In the last ten years, hon Speaker, the green economy sector attracted nearly R18-billion in foreign direct investment in this Province. This confirms the huge potential of our Province's green economy going forward and how a continued focus on strengthening our energy resilience will not only relieve pressure created by the mass power cuts, but also contribute more investment and economic growth. This is a burgeoning market, one which we will harness to the fullest potential.

Hon Speaker, we also have a major responsibility as a Province with regards to the Just Energy Transition and our role that we play on the planet, making sure that we are tackling climate change, understanding the pressure on us, understanding the pressure that our system currently where coal power is providing some power to our agri-sector. But by 2030, if we have not enabled more and more green energy, that is going to affect our ability to sell our products, agricultural and agri-processed products, to say the least, into those global markets. Therefore, we take this very, very seriously.

I also want to say that a next area that we have to target our Energy Council, our training systems for new skills, that is able to make sure that our grid is invested in, serviced and maintained and not only the national grid in this Province, the Eskom grid, but also our local government grids. I really believe that we need to make sure that just as we build solar installer skills programmes, we need to be doing exactly the same thing on high voltage energy specialists, on people that are going to be able to deal with the expansion of our grid system. At the moment there are seven and half gigawatts of power that is a potential in South Africa, of green renewable energy, but it cannot enter the grid system because the grid system has not been invested in or upgraded. We have to make sure that we are playing our part there.

Hon Speaker, last year post my engagement in the EU, we came back to this Province, and signed an agreement with our neighbouring province. Premier Zamani Saul and I made sure that both our provinces have got green hydrogen strategies – the only two provinces in South Africa – and

we signed an agreement to work together to make sure that we play our part in the Just Energy Transition, that we use the huge potential of green hydrogen demand for export to Europe as a pool factor of changing our green energy systems in our Province, fixing our problem but at the same time, creating massive investment opportunities.

We then had the privilege of hosting the National Green Hydrogen Summit here and it was really exciting to see the number of international companies really interested in what we are doing and the effect that that is going to have on the Saldanha Bay Freeport. I have spoken already about how we are going to start producing green steel into the future. These are really exciting programmes for us here in the region and not only for South Africa, for the provinces of the Western Cape and the Northern Cape, but Namibia, too, engaging to build a green hydrogen corridor here in the southern part of Africa that will be able to compete and make sure that we play a part in the global demand of green hydrogen going forward.

We also have the work being done at the moment in the Atlantis green economic zone – I was just there the other day – massive opportunities of attracting more and more investment into our region. But also, I think, that when we are going out to tender now for more energy coming into the system, we can use our own land that we have got there right next to the Ankerlig Power Station and how we can enable other energy producers. I think this will fit in nicely with the hon Mayor's call for dispatchable power.

The PREMIER: Thank you, Speaker. You indicated that this is nearly the end of the speech, but with all of these interjections it is a long way before the end of the speech.

So, Speaker, these brave dedicated, women and men are also taking guns off our streets, every single day, hundreds of guns are coming off our streets.

I think about a gun removed, I think about a life saved. I think about a gun removed, I think about a life saved. In actual fact the gun removed or a knife removed means many lives saved, many of our children's lives saved, caught in crossfire, caught in gang violence.

The PREMIER: We really want to thank these officers, day and night, out there deployed according to data and evidence, and it is making a difference. Now, Speaker, the interesting part about our Safety Plan, I call for devolution and a new model.

The interesting part there is that the Gauteng Premier, Premier Lesufi, has now raised the issue of devolution and a new model in policing and, in actual fact, when you see the minutes of the Lekgotla come out, you will see that the President said based on what Gauteng and the Western Cape have said, we need to have a discussion on a new model of policing in South Africa. I will also say and it is interesting to see the other Premiers who also want to be part of this discussion. Speaker, there was a time last year where I was really disturbed. We saw a court ruling, Judge Thulare. Judge Thulare in a bail application ruled that the top table of police management is infiltrated by gangsters. Even the

Leader of the Opposition nods his head, because we have a ruling in a court now, but go out into the public and citizens say that every single day. Now what I ask is the Police Ombudsman to do an investigation for me. I actually wondered whether we should hold a commission of inquiry, what should we do because this is the first real concrete tangible to the rumours that run rife every single day across our communities.

The Ombudsman did not recommend it and after discussion with him he was saying how are individuals going to come and give evidence in an open public forum to say the guy next door to me is the gangster linked to someone in the police, so what I have decided to do and I have already started engaging with real.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Sayed, thank you for that detail, because I said the Western Cape, 4 109 was 6,8% but if you say it is three-point something percent, I will take that. I really will take it. It looks like we are doing even better in policing.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. It is very hard not to react, so I will read it again. The Western Cape, 4 109 murders, up by 6,8%. If he says it is up by 3,6%, I again will say, I will take that. It looks like we are doing much better than what these stats say.

Speaker, I am actually speaking about something that is really serious. I am talking about, I am talking about the top table, the table with which General Patekile sits. These are very serious allegations. So, I am now in the process of establishing a panel of eminent persons. This will

include local South Africans, but also people from South America who have really dealt with similar problems.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. I will say again, so what I am doing is I am putting together or I am establishing a panel of eminent persons. I have already spoken to people out of the EU who are prepared to serve on it. We found someone out of South America that deals with policing and gangs and success stories, but also local eminent persons to help us. The report that this team will put together will not be just for me. It will be for the President, the National Minister and the National Commissioner, because we have to deal with this problem. We cannot – we cannot have gangs involved in policing. What I am also going to do is, this province, in order to make sure that the top table, the Generals, the top brass that sits alongside General Patekile, what this Province is going to do, is we are going to fund lifestyle audits for the top brass in this province.

We need to make sure that policing is cleaned up so that we can deal with the crime levels of this province.

The PREMIER: Speaker, in 2022 the Violence Prevention Unit was established under the auspices of the Provincial Health and Wellness Department. The unit is equipped to identify and design interventions to prevent violent crime in our communities. I spoke about gender-based violence, and Minister Fernandez taking the lead in our Government has produced a programme, a list of adverts and TV adverts and radio adverts.

The PREMIER: This is a system where we are going to really try something new. Our data coming out of the Violence Prevention Unit tells us where the hotspots are, GIS mapped, where gender-based violence happens.

We also know where, what time, who, the age, so we have identified that men between the ages of 24 and 34 are more likely to be an abuser if they themselves were abused.

The PREMIER: We have to make sure that we break the cycle, and so I want to thank the Department and the teams that have put together this programme, and you know I think about it a lot, and I want to say that I really welcome with a broken heart, the conviction of the perpetrator for murder and rape of the eight-year-old Tazne van Wyk. We need more convictions like this, but unfortunately, generally, we do not see them.

Speaker, this new programme called Stop the Cycle, it really does have a hard-hitting advert and I want to thank Minister Fernandez and her team, I got to join them in one of the sessions with about forty young men where the advert was flighted and we had a great conversation on how we end the cycle. This advert really shows you that a young boy growing up in a household of abuse often becomes the abuser in the next generation. We are finding platforms and mechanisms that men can get help, that we can break this cycle, that we need to talk about these things because if we do that, and I am saying we are trying this, because we need to also try different things. Gender-based violence numbers in

our country just keeps going up and up and up, just like the murder numbers, but this Province again is trying something new. I want to say to the partnership in Khayelitsha that we work with in FAMSA, I want to say thank you very much. I want to say to Chuma Mangxa, thank you very much, I listened to you when you said “We are killing this scourge at the root”, and that is exactly what we are doing, we are finding ways to the causalities. That is what violence prevention is all about, use the data and science, and our medical data and science are so useful in fighting crime. You use that data and science and using that in coming up with innovative ways to try to tackle the scourge. I really look forward to the rolling out of more and more of those conversations, and to monitor and see is this something that is going to work. The need, Speaker, for social services is sadly never ending. In a deeply unequal society too many people fall through the cracks. That is why we are also making further investment into more social workers and more health, mental health workers in our province in the year to come.

I also would like to use this opportunity to say, Speaker, thank you very much, to not only our social workers and our frontline workers and our nurses and our mental health care workers, I also want to say thank you to our partners, those NGOs, those NPOs, those volunteers out there, who are standing by our side, working day and night, to be that safety net for our citizens, to help us catch those most vulnerable, we are under a lot of pressure and I really value every single one of you in making the biggest difference that we can.

Speaker, in our Local Governments, we need to ensure there is stability which has been a challenge amid loadshedding and is critical in keeping our cities and towns functional and optimal. While we are tackling current challenges facing our Local Governments, we must also look at historical issues. Apartheid has left deep scars on many of our communities still evident today. Our towns and cities sadly still reflect the divisions created by Apartheid, and here, Speaker, I want to talk about the Regional Social Economic Project, the RSEP program. I am not sure if all of you know about it, you might have seen the initial stages of the VPUU, which was a partnership between ourselves here, the City of Cape Town and the KfW Development Bank.

That project morphed into continual VPUU, but RSEP across the rest of our province and in the RSEP space, Minister Bredell, thank you to you and your team for rolling this out across our local governments where we are joining up and breaking those barriers, breaking those boundaries and joining up communities.

I also want to say that I took the opportunity when I was in Europe to go to the KfW Bank, to say to them and the German Government, thank you very much for the support. They have given us over R360 million over the last few years in helping with this project. We really appreciate our partners and thank you very much to them.

I want to thank Minister Bredell for leading the Western Cape ground-breaking Inclusionary Housing Policy Framework that helps municipalities to facilitate and enhance inclusion and affordable homes

in urban centres, bringing people closer to economic opportunities and services. The introduction of inclusionary housing is complex, and it involves numerous role players and stakeholders. It must, Speaker, incentivise and operationalise investments that give us the desired changes and outcomes. We cannot do this alone, we must do this together. I am looking forward to see how that policy starts to change the environment in which we live.

Speaker, while talking about Minister Bredell, I also would like to say a big thank you through him to our dedicated professionals in the disaster-management space.

These are men and women who are out there day and night making sure we tackle fires and floods, water services during loadshedding, moving generators around, dropping everything when a flood happens in KZN, they were the first to volunteer to go to Turkey. These are amazing men and women and I want to say thank you very much for what they do in this province.

Speaker, I will also say that the Disaster Management Centre was activated when we went into loadshedding Levels 4 to 6, and that centre will remain on high alert for as long as the loadshedding persists.

Speaker, while thinking of disasters, I must reflect on our dam levels. I see they have now reached 50% capacity across our province.

The PREMIER: I want to encourage our citizens to start conserving water. We do not want another Day Zero scenario in our province. Municipalities must also enact their Water Conservation and Restriction

Policies now. We need to make sure that we are making those decisions now before it is too late. This Government will this year embark on a Water Resilience Plan.

The PREMIER: Electricity and blackouts must not cause us to take our eye off the ball. We know that water is the next crisis unless we focus on it now.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, I also want to reflect on good governance. South Africa is still feeling the impact of the dark decade under the cloud of state capture and corruption.

In the Western Cape Government we consistently and doggedly push back against those who have enabled corruption. We have built a government people can trust based on our values. We make sure that whistleblowers are taken seriously and protected.

I am very grateful to all of our staff for ensuring that in the 2021/22 financial year, 100% Provincial Government departments received an unqualified audit. Thank you very much, DG, and all of the HODs sitting here, we really value your dedication to getting the basics right.

Hon Speaker, when you get the basics right you can then focus on the citizen.

Hon Speaker, while talking about the citizen I want to say as a government that we are listening. Bryant McGill 1 says one of the sincerest forms of respect is actually listening to what others has to say

or what another has to say.

Hon Speaker, I personally have crisscrossed this province listening to people as we do. The Ministers, the HODs, we go and listen. I arrive at service delivery points unannounced because we do not want coffee and muffins, we do not want to place swept up, I want to arrive and go and sit in the queue along with a citizen waiting for their service, experiencing what it is like to be a citizen receiving service from this government.

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker, for the upcoming financial year I have lobbied the Provincial Treasury to fund the project that focuses on improving the customer service experience and the face of our government. That face that we present to our citizens and through that listening programme we will identify those spaces that need to be worked on. We need to make sure that those waiting rooms, that that frontline service, gets better and better.

Hon Speaker, I have also met the most remarkable people. I have met them in Prince Albert, the PACT Youth Centre, people that are arranging a jazz festival this May, and any of you who have not got your tickets yet you better do it quickly. It is not a big town, you do not want to drive hundreds of miles to get to that Jazz Festival, but what an amazing group of young people.

In Laingsburg I visited our safe house for women and children. Amazing people there as well that dedicate their time to look after the most

vulnerable in our systems.

I have mentioned Mitchells Plain. Mitchells Plain walking with neighbourhood watches, Mitchells Plain walking with the LEAP offices.

Also going to Bishop Lavers, to other areas of our hotspots, walking with the neighbourhood watches, meeting with the police, meeting with our law enforcement and LEAP offices, making sure that I am also listening as we grow and build out the Safety Plan.

I was also in Matjiesfontein. There I met some workers producing mineral water. That was amazing to see and to see how that water is sent around our country. Also thinking about Matjiesfontein, I also, along with Minister Wenger, got to meet the team from NASA. That does not happen very often, but what are NASA doing here? They are investing in Matjiesfontein and they have built an observatory there to monitor space as NASA puts further people on the moon and continues with some of their expansion programmes.

I have also visited places like Siki's Koffee in Khayelitsha and Siki is here today. Here is an amazing entrepreneur. Visiting his coffee shop, listening to his stories, meeting people in his coffee shop that are on their laptops, offering advisory services, linking on meetings to London. Really amazing, but then when I went a second time suddenly it is a roastery, the business is growing. Now he is supplying roasted coffee beans to a whole lot of other coffee shops and businesses, but more than that he has actually expanded his business very proudly as an entrepreneur and opened his second coffee shop in Claremont.

Hon Speaker, my team and I have listened to your ideas, suggestions. Most importantly your complaints at our First Thursdays. I mentioned the last First Thursday in Mitchells Plain. The amazing thing for me was having a look at how an investment in our labs and using First Thursdays is creating its own energy. How amazing to walk down the street around a cul-de-sac and there is a grand piano with one of our musicians playing music. A garage turned into an open mic or a string quartet of food stalls or art on the walls where buyers from Switzerland are buying art to take back home. Really amazing when you see an entrepreneur start something, other entrepreneurs come along. We must celebrate our entrepreneurs in our region.

Hon Speaker, I also want to talk about listening and connectivity and that is our broadband connectivity. We are now at 1 366 Western Cape sites across this province. Across this province.

The PREMIER: I also want to say that I will not ignore our citizens' complaints. We must listen and learn from the issues that they raise with us. The reality is that we are not perfect, hon Speaker, but we constantly strive to working harder and doing better.

As much as you the citizen are at the centre of what we do, the Western Cape Government's culture and values also occupy the centre role in our work. We will continue to live these values in everything that we do so that we can give the impact to you, the citizen. We must inspire and aspire to be better as a government and better as a province.

Hon Speaker, the by-line in The Washington Post is:

"Democracy dies in the darkness."

I will not let our democracy flounder. Instead my commitment to the residents of the Western Cape is that our democracy and our economy will flourish. We will continue to work with the fierce urgency of now.

Many of our citizens are struggling and suffering. They look to us for help and action. You, the citizen, the people of this extraordinary province are at the centre of everything that we do.

The PREMIER: Working today for tomorrow.

Hon Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the members of this Parliament, the role that you play, you need to make sure that we have clear oversight specifically in this disaster that comes.

I want to thank the Ministers in each and every one of their portfolios. How they keep pushing the boundaries to do better and better for the citizens of our province.

I would like to thank my family. I would like to thank them for the backup you give me even when I am not there.

The PREMIER: I want to thank, I want to thank my office. You are not sitting here, but probably watching on that screen. Every single one of you. Thank you very much for the support that you give me.

I want to thank the Administration. None of this can happen without an administration. Dedicated, professional and amazing citizens that go to

work every single day to make the biggest difference that they and their departments can.

Hon Speaker, this government is citizen obsessed. We are obsessed with doing our best for the people to ensure all our citizens can find the dignity and wellbeing that they deserve. By constantly innovating we can improve and modernize the way we do what we do.

The PREMIER: We are working with an acute sense of urgency given the challenges we need to overcome. We are honoured by the faith and trust the people of the Western Cape have put in us and it is my firm duty to be seized by the fierce urgency of now and deliver.

Citizens of the Western Cape, as South Africa crumbles and breaks around us. I want to assure you that this government will continue to grow and build a better future for you. We are the Cape of Good Hope.

We are the hope for South Africa. I thank you. [Applause.]

8. The House adjourned at 12:58.

ROMEO ADAMS  
Secretary to the Provincial Parliament