



Northern Cape  
Provincial Legislature

# NC Parli Melt

VIGILANT ALWAYS FOR OUR PEOPLE



## In This Edition

NCPL Hosts Critical Budget Votes  
Northern Cape Provincial Legislature:  
2024/25 Budget vote 2 Speech  
Highlights  
Confronting Infrastructure Challenges in  
the Northern Cape: Provincial Week



# NC Parli Melt

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# Reflections from the Desk of the Secretary

As we close the chapter on September, I find it important to reflect on the significant themes that have shaped our month. Heritage Month provided us a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures and histories that unit us as a province. This observance underscored the importance of recognizing and valuing our unique heritage. Our diverse heritage not only enriches our communities but also strengthens our collective identity. I encourage everyone to continue embracing and sharing their cultural narratives, as they are vital to our unity.

This month also marked a critical phase for the Legislature as we engaged in Budget Votes discussion in the appropriation process, which determine the allocation of resources for our communities. It is our responsibility to ensure that these decisions reflect the needs and priorities of all citizens. Effective oversight in this process is essential to uphold transparency and accountability in funding decisions that are vital for addressing the needs of our constituents effectively.

The NCOP Week in the Northern Cape resembled a time to highlight the role of the National Council of Provinces in addressing local concerns. Engaging with national and local leaders allowed us to address pressing issues and foster a sense of community. These interactions are a platform for dialogue and collaboration and are crucial for strengthening our stakeholder relations within the province.

September also saw us observe Deaf Awareness Month, whereby the Legislature conducted Deaf Awareness session, highlighting the challenges faced by the Deaf community, the importance of tolerance and to promote inclusivity for the Deaf community. Let us continue to advocate for equal access and opportunities, breaking down barriers and ensuring everyone has a voice.

Lastly, I want to emphasize our commitment to employee wellness remains a priority. The initiatives launched to promote mental and physical well-being are not just programs; they are essential to creating a supportive work environment. By fostering a culture of wellness, we prioritise our well-being; enhancing both productivity and morale in our workplace.



As we move forward, let us remember to celebrate our heritage, advocate for equitable resources, support inclusivity, and prioritize our well-being. Together, we can make a meaningful impact and create a brighter future for all in the Northern Cape.





## **NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE: 2024/25 BUDGET VOTE 2 SPEECH HIGHLIGHTS**



On September 17, 2024, Speaker Newrene Klaaste presented the 2024/25 Budget Vote for the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature. This speech, marking the maiden budget of the 7th Legislature, also serves as the final budget from the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Speaker Klaaste emphasized the importance of reflecting on past achievements while focusing on future goals.



## Key Highlights and Initiatives

### 1. Strategic Goals and Achievements

Speaker Klaaste reported that the 6th legislature's experiences had equipped the current administration with valuable lessons. The focus she said remained, on creating a "Modern, Inspirational, Responsive, Proactive, and Activist Legislature" that advances the aspirations of the Northern Cape's people. The 2024/25 budget reflects the final implementation phase of the 5-year strategic plan.

### 2. Oversight and Law-Making

The Legislature's core functions — Public Participation, Law Making, and Oversight, remain central. The institution aims to ensure government departments are responsive to the people, with oversight committees playing a crucial role. The development of an automated house resolution tracking tool is underway to streamline committee activities.

### 3. Budget Challenges and Solutions

Klaaste in her speech reported that budget cuts pose significant challenges, particularly in a sparsely populated province like the Northern Cape. The speaker said despite these constraints, the Legislature remains committed to maintaining high standards of oversight and public participation. The budget also faced a decrease now standing at R223.310 million for the 2024/25 financial year while it stood at R276.878 million in previous years. The Speaker accounted this budget decrease to the non-recurrence of once-off allocations.

The speaker also highlighted strides made by different units in the Legislature.

#### Research and Information Services

Speaker Klaaste reported that the NCPL Research and Information Services Section play a pivotal role in supporting legislative responsibilities. The Speaker announced that efforts were being made to fill vacant research positions in the unit and establish partnerships with institutions like the Human Sciences Research Council and Sol Plaatjie University to enhance the institution's research capacity.

#### Public Participation and Communication

Speaker Klaaste went on to announce that the Legislature was prioritizing public involvement through the implementation of the Public Participation and Communication Strategies. These strategies aim to educate the public about the Legislature's functions and encourage active participation in legislative processes.

#### 4. Legislative Milestones

Significant Acts passed in the 2023/24 financial year include the Northern Cape Economic Development, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency Amendment Act and the Northern Cape Consumer Protection Amendment Act. The Legislature also adopted new Standing Rules to strengthen oversight capabilities.



**5. Capacity Building and Human Capital Development**

The Legislature continues to invest in the professional development of its Members and staff. Partnerships with academic institutions like WITS and UJ provide valuable training opportunities. The Legislature’s study assistance programme supports Members pursuing further education.

**6. Security, Maintenance, Records Management and Building Safety**

Enhancing security measures and managing records effectively are ongoing priorities. Despite challenges like high underground water levels, the Legislature is addressing maintenance needs through strategic planning and stakeholder collaboration.

The Speaker announced that the recent filling of the Registry Officer position brought stability to the Records Unit. She went on to inform the house that records awareness and development programmes were underway, including proper record handling and management. Speaker Klaaste said the legislature would also be collaborating with the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture to ensure compliance with laws and regulations for record transfer and disposals. She also noted that the Registry Manual is in advanced stages of implementation, and that it would set a standard for records management.

With advice sought from the Department of Roads and Public Works, the Speaker highlighted that the general safety of the building is being reviewed through technical assessments on critical maintenance focus areas. Strategies for managing high underground water levels are under consideration, including borehole drilling and improved water distribution methods.

**7. Building Maintenance and Infrastructure**

The Speaker informed the House that the Legislature building had been built on top of a water bed which resulted in ongoing moisture issues due to high water levels. This state necessitated frequent maintenance and repairs. She reported that maintenance expenditures was managed transparently with detailed reports and plans reflecting the use of the maintenance budget. She mentioned that the Facilities Unit was addressing various maintenance needs, including vegetation control, air conditioning installation, subsoil water pump servicing, and repair of electrical and plumbing infrastructure.

A reported proactive approach would be utilized for upgrading backup generators and the electrical switchgear. The legislature also proposed a refurbishment of ablution facilities starting with the Members’ and Assembly Buildings. An estimated budget of R2 million is allocated for this phase, expected to take approximately three months for completion.

**8. Financial Management and IT Modernization**

The Legislature has achieved a clean audit for the fourth consecutive year, reflecting its commitment to accountability and financial integrity. The IT Division aims to modernize systems and reduce the carbon footprint by transitioning to a paperless environment. Speaker Klaaste concluded the speech by expressing gratitude to the African National Congress, the Legislature’s management and staff, and her family. She emphasized the importance of unity and progress, quoting former U.S. President Barack Obama: “We are the ones we’ve been waiting for; we are the change that we seek.”

# NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE HOSTS CRITICAL BUDGET VOTE DEBATES

Throughout September 2024, the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature held a series of significant House Sittings focusing on the Economic Sector and the Social Protection and Governance Cluster. These debates brought forward key discussions on infrastructure, economic development, social protection, education, and public safety.

## Economic Cluster Debates

The session on 10th September 2024 opened with Premier Dr. Zamani Saul commemorating the lives of community members tragically lost in a bus accident and highlighting the Premier's office schedule for September. Following this, the focus shifted to legislative matters, starting with MPL Davids, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, who presented the committee report on the Northern Cape Appropriation Bill, 2024.

The MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms Venus Blennis presented Budget Vote: Economic Development, outlining critical provincial priorities:

- Strengthening partnerships with the private sector to boost manufacturing and create export-driven economic growth.
- Developing the Cape metals and machinery sector through an industrial cluster master plan.
- Elevating the province's role in green energy through the Green Hydrogen Strategy.
- Investing in innovation, including digital skills training for youth and developing a "smart city."

## Debate Highlights:

- MPL Rhoda (DA) raised concerns about financial transparency and the costs involved in the department's rationalization process, calling for improved service delivery.
- MPL Konote (EFF) stressed the need for state control over natural resources and land ownership to drive industrialization and called for decisive action against joblessness and corruption.
- Hon. Joubert (VF Plus) discussed the agricultural sector's challenges, exacerbated by drought and COVID-19, and emphasized the need for better infrastructure, particularly roads and water resources, to support agriculture and tourism.
- Hon. Motlhaping underscored the importance of tackling corruption, stimulating economic growth through infrastructure investment, and supporting small enterprises in sectors like renewable energy and mining.



## Focus on Agriculture and Land Reform

During the second debate of the day, MPL Rashad Jaffer presented the committee report on Budget Vote 12. He addressed ongoing challenges such as asbestos house roofs and the need for the permanent employment of people living with disabilities. Additionally, MEC Monopole emphasized the pressing issues in the agricultural sector, including water scarcity and climate change, while calling for strategic partnerships to secure funding for critical infrastructure projects. Hon. Tlaole (EFF) reiterated that land ownership remains central to true community development for Black South Africans.

On 12 September 2024, the Legislature shifted its focus to the **Social Protection and Governance Cluster**. MPL Sharifa Ferris, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Safety, Transport, and Public Works, presented Budget Vote 3, with key recommendations, including the repair of non-functioning weighbridges crucial for road safety and revenue generation. MEC Bentley Vass presented the department's budget, which focused on improving public transport safety, insourcing security services, and establishing community safety forums.

### Debate Highlights:

- MPL Liebenberg (DA) raised concerns about the department's failure to fully operationalize safety structures and the absence of key officials at critical meetings.
- MPL Thlaole (EFF) called for stronger collaboration between the provincial government and law enforcement to combat crime and emphasized the need for transparency in the hiring process of traffic officers.
- MPL Ferris highlighted staff shortages in police stations and called for mining companies to support infrastructure maintenance.

## Education and Cultural Development

On 17th September, the focus turned to Budget Vote 4: Education. MEC Abraham Vosloo emphasized the expansion of the National School Nutrition Programme, the introduction of a school safety volunteer programme, and collaboration with the Department of Sports to fund school sports programs.

### Debate Highlights:

- MPL Isaacs expressed concern over severe budget cuts, projecting an R846 million overspend, and urged the department to adopt better fiscal management.
- MPL Konote (EFF) criticized cuts to the school infrastructure grant and the department's failure to address transportation issues for disabled learners.

The day concluded with a debate on Budget Vote 7: Sports, Arts, and Culture. MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi outlined the department's commitment to supporting artists, promoting cultural programs, and improving the province's library services.

### Debate Highlights:

- MPL Liebenberg called for increased investment in rural youth sports and cultural sustainability.
- MPL Thlaole (EFF) urged the department to support young athletes and address accessibility issues for sports facilities.

The final debate, held on September 17, 2024, focused on the **Governance and Social Protection Cluster**. The presentations were delivered by the MECs for Roads & Public Works, Health, and Social Development. Speaker Newrene Klaaste presented Budget Vote 02, outlining the Legislature's achievements and challenges, followed by Premier Dr. Zamani Saul, who presented Budget Vote 01. The session concluded with the official adoption of the Northern Cape Main Appropriation Bill for 2024.

These comprehensive debates emphasized the Legislature's commitment to economic growth, public safety, education, and cultural development, despite facing financial and infrastructural challenges.





**The Northern Cape  
Provincial Legislature  
hosts critical Budget votes  
throughout the month of  
September**









MPL Thlaole emphasized the need for accessible sports facilities and urged the department to support young athletes.



DEBATE HIGHLIGHTS FROM BUDGET VOTE 4



MPL Dehuis raised concerns over R34.5 million in budget cuts to the library services program and called for creative solutions to secure funding

MPL Liebenberg called for more investment in rural youth sports and criticized the lack of sustainability in cultural projects.



## CONFRONTING INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES IN THE NORTHERN CAPE: PROVINCIAL WEEK

**DATE: 16 – 20 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**THEME: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN TIMELY PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY**

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) recently held a Provincial Week in the Northern Cape, focusing on the pressing issues related to public infrastructure. This event, organized in collaboration with the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, brought together provincial leaders, municipal representatives, and various stakeholders to discuss solutions for improving infrastructure delivery.

On 16 September, a briefing session took place at the Ruth First Auditorium, featuring discussions on the current state of provincial and municipal infrastructure. Key participants included Hon P Mabilo (NCOP Provincial Whip), Hon K Mmoiemang (Chief Whip of the National Council of Provinces), Deputy Speaker Mangaliso Matika, Premier Dr Z Saul, and representatives from the Auditor-General's Office, the Department of Roads, and Public Works, and COGHSTA.

### **Key Issues Addressed:**

- **Water Infrastructure and Supply:** Ageing infrastructure is causing unreliable water supply. Efforts such as the Vaal Gamagara bulk water scheme and the Calvinia bulk water supply project aim to improve this situation.
- The Premier announced that the launch of the R1 billion housing project would significantly address the province's housing problems.
- **Sports Infrastructure:** Over R501 million has been allocated for sports projects, although phased implementation will be necessary due to budget constraints.
- **Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG):** The 2024/25 allocation prioritizes water, sanitation, roads, and community projects.





On 17 September 2024, the site visit focused on the infill housing project in Ritchie within the Sol Plaatjie Municipality. Led by Chief Director Mr. Booysen from the Department of Human Settlements, the visit aimed to assess the current status and challenges of the housing initiative.

Officials reported that the project initiated in 2014, aimed to build 328 houses; however, it has stalled due to budget constraints, with no houses constructed since inception. The Department of Human Settlements reported to have made strides by issuing title deeds to residents but faced complications as a result as some residents have left the area or moved onto the plot stands without proper tenure. They reported that the situation now required the department to engage title deed owners before construction could commence.

The estimated cost of building one housing structure has increased to R173,000, significantly up from R110,000 in 2014. In response to these challenges, the Department reported to be conducting housing consumer education within communities. These workshops provide information on subsidies, maintenance, and title deeds. The department also reported on efforts to trace beneficiaries by publishing their names in local newspapers. Reports showed 43 beneficiaries on plot stands currently awaiting housing in Ward 27.



Several challenges emerged during the visit including:

- The issuance of title deeds before house construction, resulting in some beneficiaries moving away while others occupy the land without proper title.
- A lack of geotechnical reports, although a service provider has been appointed to conduct these assessments.
- A backlog of 80,000 houses in the Northern Cape Province.





The Department of Human Settlements committed to ensuring proper community consultation regarding title deeds within three months of the adoption of the Provincial Week report. The Delegation recommended that the department engage in thorough consultation with community members to keep them informed about housing developments. The department was also advised to locate dependents of deceased title deed holders to allocate housing and land to rightful beneficiaries within nine months of the report's adoption.

At the Kalahari Intermediary School site, key stakeholders, including MEC Makatong and representatives from the Department of Education, provided updates on the project. Initiated on 20 September 2022, the school is designed to meet the educational needs of a newly established residential area. The project has experienced a four-month delay due to the removal of protected trees and payment issues, with a current budget of R120.8 million. Despite these challenges, the project has created 22 jobs, primarily for youth. Completion is anticipated by February 2025, with the school opening in January 2026.

The oversight delegation then visited the Bankhara Bodulong Primary School project, aimed at alleviating overcrowding in local schools. With a budget of R124.2 million, the project began in September 2022 and is currently 40% complete. Although the site was temporarily closed due to non-payment issues, it is set to reopen soon, creating 87 job opportunities. The school is expected to open in January 2026.

### Challenges and Commitments

Both projects face significant hurdles, including delays due to late payments and environmental approvals. MEC Makatong committed to submitting a memorandum to secure funding and will engage relevant stakeholders to expedite project completion. The Mayor of Ga-Segonyana was tasked with ensuring transparent recruitment practices for contractors.

The delegation then visited key infrastructure sites in the Dikgatlong and Sol Plaatjie Local Municipalities on 19 September 2024. The first stop was in the Dikgatlong Municipality where the MEC for Roads and Public Works, Ms Fufe Makatong, gave the delegation an in-depth report on the Pniel Paving Project.

Makatong reported that the paving project is part of an empowerment programme for emerging contractors, funded through a R15.3 million grant. The department reported that the project, currently at 95% completion, had created 57 jobs and aimed to connect the Pniel community to the R31 route. A delay in contractor payment from the National Department had slightly affected progress, but phase one is expected to be completed by 30 September 2024.





Key takeaways from this site visit were that Phase two of the project was fully funded and construction would begin soon.

The delegation then moved to the Nursing Accomodation Project in the Sol Plaatjie Municipality. Departmental officials reported that phase one of the nursing accommodation valued at R192 million was completed in October 2023, providing space for 350 students. However, issues like vandalism and accreditation delays have stalled student occupancy. Phase two, set to cost R569 million, is underway but has been slowed due to non-payment of contractors. The MEC for Health and MEC for Roads and Public Works committed to resolving payment and coordination within 30 days.

#### Challenges and Recommendations:

- Challenges: Delays caused by non-payment of contractors, capacity issues, and vandalism.
- Recommendations: Strengthen oversight, improve project management, and address non-payment to contractors.

The last site visited during the week-long expedition was the Hull Street Social Housing Project in Sol Plaatjie Local Municipality. COGHSTA officials reported that the project aimed to deliver 362 housing units for low-income households, funded by the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA). The project had however experienced a series of delays due to water seepage and contractor issues, with no significant progress in construction since the last oversight site visit that took place in 2023.

A key takeaway from the visit was that the department would provide a detailed report on the project's challenges and the next steps must be submitted to the NCOP within one month.

Overall, the fourth day highlighted the importance of empowering contractors and improving coordination to ensure the successful delivery of infrastructure in the Northern Cape.

The Provincial Week emphasized the need for collaboration and stronger oversight to address infrastructure challenges in the Northern Cape. By acting on the recommendations and holding parties accountable, the province can make significant progress in public infrastructure and service delivery.







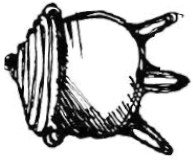






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