



public works,
roads & transport

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

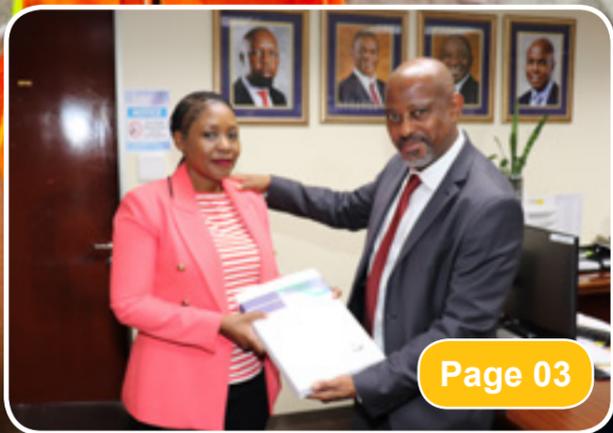


Departmental Newsletter

April 2025 - September 2025

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DPWRT SETS SIGHT ON TURNING MPUMALANGA INTO CONSTRUCTION SITE



In the next five years, the Department plans to turn Mpumalanga province into a construction site, rolling out the mass infrastructure provision which will unlock public and private investment. This move promises to boost the economic growth pushing for the creation of more jobs and eradication of poverty. Mpumalanga projects a 3% to 5% economic growth, despite the global economic uncertainties plagued by high job losses caused by high tariff rate showdown. The statement was revealed during the tabling of the Policy and Budget Speech delivered on the 22nd of August 2025 by the honourable MEC Thulasizwe Thomo at the Provincial Legislatures.

In pursuit of this objective, the Province will invest more than R2.8 billion towards the Transport Infrastructure which includes the upgrade, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads. In the current financial year, plans are underway to complete, the 7km tourist route between Mooiplaas and Ekulindeni, the D2274 to D1398 coal haul route North of Hendrina and Nkangala, a tourist route P33/4 in Bohlabela which connects Hazyview and Sabie. In addition, the day to day maintenance of roads will be the main focus of the Department. The eradication of potholes and the cleaning of storm water drainage system will be the main focus of the Department.



The first semester of the 2025/26 financial year has been a period of progress, resilience and renewed commitment to service delivery for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport. Guided by our mandate, we have continued to focus on infrastructure development, road maintenance, transport safety and job creation through programmes that support the growth of our Province.

The Department received an unqualified audit opinion on the current audit cycle of 2024/2025 financial year on 30 July 2025. We are going to ensure that we do better and more in the next audit cycle.

Our flagship Kubhunya Lutfuli eMpumalanga Programme remains at the heart of our service delivery drive, enabling us to transform communities by improving schools, roads, and public facilities. Significant milestones were achieved in the first semester, including the reconstruction of critical bridges, rollout of infrastructure partnerships with TVET colleges, and strengthening of public transport law enforcement through the addition of new Inspectorate vehicles.

This semester also saw us intensify collaborations with municipalities and strategic partners to accelerate infrastructure delivery, while promoting skills development and empowerment opportunities for youth, women and persons with disabilities.

As we move into the second semester, our priorities will remain anchored in delivering sustainable infrastructure, enhancing road safety, and ensuring that our work continues to uplift communities and contribute meaningfully to the province's socio-economic development.

I wish to extend my gratitude to the honourable MEC Thulasizwe Thomo for his leadership, to our dedicated staff for their hard work, and to our communities for their partnership and trust. Together, we remain committed to building a connected, safe and prosperous Mpumalanga.

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR
Bongani Dhlamini

SUB-EDITOR
Dimakatso Matentshi

DESIGNERS
Bonginkosi Dlamini
Mfundo Mkhathswa

CONTRIBUTORS
Rodney Madalane
Portia Mnisi, Rachel Nkosi
Nothando Ndlovu, Benika Khambule,
Hope Nyalungu, Gloria Mazibuko,
Nothando Mbatha

(A) HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS
Moosa Ntimba

COMMENTS
Should you wish to comment on this newsletter or share your views with the readers of @Work, you can email your views or comments to:

CommunicationDpwrt@mpg.gov.za
Tel: 013 766 6850

Website: dpwrt.mpg.gov.za

DISCLAIMER
Although care has been taken to verify the accuracy of information, the editorial team extends sincere apology for any inconsistencies that may occur.

The Kubhunya Lutfuli eMpumalanga Programme, which augments the existing Operation Vala Zonke programme was officially launched in October last year. This programme is a positive move to intensify the eradication of potholes, bringing the much needed relief to road users.

Meanwhile, the Province has transferred at least 1,041 km of provincial road to SANRAL, meaning some of the responsibilities and management of roads maintenance are now in the hands of the national roads agency. This move will greatly assist in acquiring additional resources for road infrastructure.

Beside the collaboration with national departments, the Department has also struck some partnership with the Private sector. MEC Thomo applauded the importance of collaboration between the private and public sector, after the successful partnership between the Department and mining houses such as Glencore, RPM, Two Rivers Mine North and Samanor and Chrome. Together, the Department with various mines successfully collaborated for the rehabilitation of P171/ 1 road between Mashishing and Rossenekal.



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

MEC Thomo has indicated that government is determined to improve social infrastructure aimed at improving the quality of life for every citizen in the province. To ensure that this mandate is realized, the provincial government invested more than R2.5 billion for implementing projects in the current financial year. A total of 105 education facilities, 6 health infrastructures, 6 projects for the Department of Social Development, 6 projects for the Department of Culture, Sports and Recreation will be implemented.



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

Statistics shows that youth unemployment in Mpumalanga has reached an all-time high, which currently stand at 62% from 49,3%, triggering government to act decisively. The Expanded Public Works Programme remains a backbone for job creation, with at least 191 733 work opportunities expected in the next five years. These jobs are expected through the state entities including 30 public bodies across the board. To address empowerment of emerging contractors, MEC Thomo explained that the Enterprise Development Programme will continue to improve the CIDB grading of emerging contractors, so that they become fully fledged contractors.



DEPARTMENT RECEIVES AN UNQUALIFIED AUDIT OPINION

The Department is proud to announce that it has received an unqualified audit opinion for the 2024/2025 financial year. The audit report was officially handed over to the Head of Department, Mr Charles Morolo, on 30 July 2025.

An unqualified audit opinion confirms that the Department's financial statements are free from material misstatements and comply with the Public Finance Management Act and other regulatory standards. This milestone is a strong indicator of good governance, accountability and sound financial management.

Commenting on the achievement, HOD Morolo said: *"This success reflects our dedication to transparency and financial discipline. It is the result of the hard work of our officials, and we will continue to build on this momentum to strengthen service delivery and maintain public trust."*

The Department will continue to prioritize financial integrity and accountability as part of its service delivery mandate. Achieving an unqualified audit opinion is not the end, but rather a foundation for continuous improvement in governance and operational excellence.



MPUMALANGA PROVIDES ANOTHER STATE OF THE ART EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE: MKHONDO BOARDING SCHOOL

A significant milestone has been reached in Mpumalanga’s education landscape with the official handover of the Mkhondo Combined Boarding School. The state-of-the-art facility was unveiled by Premier Mandla Ndlovu, joined by MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mr Thulasizwe Thomo; MEC for Education, Ms Lindi Masina and a host of provincial and local dignitaries. The boarding school was officially handed over on the 5th of August 2025.

This long-awaited development marks a major step towards transforming rural education by ensuring that learners from historically disadvantaged communities have access to quality facilities within the Mkhondo Local Municipality.

Speaking at the event, MEC Thomo highlighted the collaborative effort that brought the project to fruition, *“We are proud to have played a key role in delivering this state-of-the-art facility possible. Our appreciation goes to our Departmental Building Infrastructure Team and the entire project team for their sterling work and collaboration throughout this journey.”*

The boarding school which is now operational, accommodates 425 learners from ten former farm schools, consolidating resources to provide an environment conducive to academic growth. With eight dormitories, 32 modern classrooms, a library, science laboratory, computer centre, and multipurpose dining hall, the facility has been designed to serve the holistic needs of learners. Plans are already in place to expand enrolment up to Grade 12 in the coming year, further entrenching the school’s role as a flagship for rural education in the province.

Beyond education, the project has also delivered tangible socio-economic benefits. Since its commencement, the construction of the school created 932 job opportunities, of which 373 were secured by youth and 226 by women, affirming government’s commitments to inclusive economic participation.

In addition, 59 locally based companies, including 23 suppliers from other parts of the Province, were beneficiaries during implementation. R81.5 million has been spent on SMMEs, demonstrating how government infrastructure projects serve as critical catalyst for local enterprise development and skills transfer.

The official handover was attended by Executive Mayors, senior government officials and Traditional Leaders, and their presence highlighted the significance of this achievement for the local community.

The Mkhondo Combined Boarding School is more than just a building. It represents a new benchmark in school infrastructure, and a promise of opportunity, dignity, and empowerment for generations of young learners.



ERADICATION OF UNSAFE SCHOOL AND PIT LATRINES STRUCTURES IN MPUMALANGA GAINS MOMENTUM



Education is key for growth and development of any economy in the world. Schools play a pivotal role towards nurturing the mind and imparting knowledge required to shape the future of any country, hence the provision of resources is essential. In rural areas, school infrastructure provision remains a challenge because unsafe mud schools and pit latrines are prevalent. Nonetheless, government made a significant progress to eradicate unsafe structures in impoverished schools.

The introduction of Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) which was launched in 2011 to eradicate schools built on inappropriate materials such as asbestos and zinc as well as the Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) initiative targeting unsafe

pit toilets, are beginning to bear fruits.

The achievement of these programmes are well demonstrated in Mpumalanga province with schools in remote villages such as the Godide Secondary School benefiting. The Department, as an implementing agent for the Department of Education, demolished an old unsafe structure of the school making way for the construction of a new building.

The new structure consists of 12 classroom blocks, administration block, computer centre, library, science laboratory, school hall and other amenities. The project started in March 2024 and completed in August 2025 at a cost of approximately R52 million, injecting work opportunities for locals.

NEW EDUCATION STRUCTURE IN BOSCHFONTEIN PAVES WAY FOR FUTURE SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS



Thabisile Ngomane is a 16-year-old student at Langa Secondary School, in Boschfontein north-east site of Nkomazi Local Municipality. She is currently doing her grade 9 studies majoring in physical science and mathematics. She wants to pursue engineering studies after completing her high school education. The future is bright for this young girl who promises to change the living condition of her impoverished family. @Work spoke to her about her education interest.

According to Ms Ngomane, engineering field is her first choice because of the massive opportunities which exist within the field, *“I can become a quantity surveyor, electrical or mechanical engineer,”* she explained. She attributed her choices of career into the resources available at school. Schools in rural areas have adequate resources, similar to those in urban areas. *“We have science labs, where we can perform practical and experiments, so we truly appreciate efforts made by government. They built these facilities so that learning can be better at schools,”* she explained.

Langa Secondary School is one of the schools in the province which is under construction at a tune of R48 million. The construction constitutes the substitution of the mobile structure and construction of new facilities. The scope of work includes the construction of a new guardhouse, 12 new classrooms, administration block, library, computer center, science lab, kitchen, 20 Enviro-Loo toilets, ramps and rails, two combi courts, rehabilitation of existing soccer field, 28 covered parking area and driveways, mechanical, electrical works and fire compliance and external works. The project started in February 2024 with the completion date expected to take place in March 2026

For years, the school operated in temporary mobile structures, which were often affected by extreme weather conditions and limited space. The new development will address these challenges by providing durable, well-ventilated, and fully equipped classrooms designed to meet the needs of both learners and educators. The Department which oversees the overall management of the project appointed a local contractor, which employed at least 43 locals during the construction phase.

DUMPHRIES VILLAGERS PIN HOPES ON R40 MILLION CLINIC

There are many clinics across provinces with inadequate infrastructure ranging from broken toilets to small areas with inadequate ventilation. Access to quality health care service is a right not a privilege as enshrined in the country’s constitution. Every citizen living in rural or urban areas is entitled to quality health care services despite their socio-economic background hence attempts by government to avert these disparities. A national report from the National Department of Health revealed that at least 55% of all clinics in the country are gaining an ideal clinic status. An ideal clinic status is a facility that complies with a range of requirements as set by the Department of Health.

An ideal clinic status is what the community of Dumphries in Bushbuckridge Local municipality is set to benefit from. These state of the art health infrastructure in Mpumalanga will bring the much needed health care services to the impoverished village which previously relied on the mobile clinic. The mobile clinic often visits the area



twice a week, according to one resident of Dumphries, Mr Thomas Dibakoane. Mr Dibakoane is a patient with chronic condition, hence the need to do regular checkup with the doctor and the new health facility is a beacon of hope for him. @Work engaged with Mr Dibakoane about the new health facility. *“I am happy about the construction of the clinic, I don’t have to travel far for my monthly check-ups anymore. I hope it will be open for 24 hrs so that the community can get services after hours,”* he appealed.

The Department which oversees the construction of health structures in the Province, is building the clinic at the cost of more than R40 million. The construction of this 8hours clinic, started in May 2024 with work expected to end in December 2025. The project had economic spin offs with at least 38 people getting employment during the construction process.

INVESTMENT ON KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

The construction of the state of the art Community library in an impoverished community of Warburton, promises to unlock a culture of learning and instil knowledge in a society plagued by high illiteracy rate. Rural areas bear the brunt of high illiteracy due to lack of resources such as books and facilities. The construction of the project is currently underway under the management of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.

Although the education system of the area is expected to receive a major boost, local business and labours will reap the rewards of the construction processes, injecting employment for locals. A total of more than R20 million will be invested in the project which is scheduled for completion in January 2026. The scope of works includes the construction of a guard house, general site works, storm water drainage, tower structure, paving and road works, ramps

for accessibility, precast concrete benches, a fully developed car park, as well as electrical and mechanical installations. These features are designed to ensure that the facility is not only functional but also safe, inclusive, and sustainable.

Once completed, the Warburton Community Library will exist as more than just a building, it will be a beacon of empowerment. It will open doors for learners, educators, job seekers, and the broader community to access information, digital resources, and lifelong learning opportunities. This project is a direct response to the government’s commitment to leaving no community behind, ensuring that even rural and semi-rural areas have access to infrastructure that promote education, knowledge sharing, and community development.



Policy & Budget *Speech*



Youth *Month Celebration*



Mandela Month Celebration



Women's Month Celebration



Heritage Month Celebration



DPWRT PUSHES FOR REFORMS IN THE TAXI INDUSTRY

The taxi industry is the largest informal transport system which carries over 70% of commuters daily. For decades, the industry has been plagued by violence, internal infightings which left a trail of bloodshed amongst drivers, taxi bosses with commuters not spared from these killings. Statistics from the South African Police Services shows that more than 300 people within the period of 5 years were caught in the crossfires of these taxi violence, hence an urgent need for reforms. Government's effort to bring stability in the taxi industry has not gone unnoticed, as legislative frameworks taking shape to formalize the industry.

Government with all role players convened various consultative engagements to resolve some of the standoffs in the industry. In one of its previous engagements in 2020 during the National Taxi Lekgotla. The meeting resolved to implement Unity and Leadership of the taxi industry, Regulation and Control, Economic Empowerment, Professionalization and Customer Care amongst others. In the light of the above,

the National Department of Transport appointed PEGASYS to assess the progress made by various provinces on the implementation of these resolutions.

With that in mind, PEGASYS landed in Mpumalanga on the 03rd of July 2025 to assess the progress made by province. All transport policy makers in Mpumalanga converged in Middelburg on the 3rd of July 2025 at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality to update PEGASYS about work done thus far. Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport which was spearheading the exercise gave an account on some of the resolutions take during the Provincial Taxi Indaba which was held in 2023. The indaba gave an emphasis on promoting unity in the industry, regulating e-hailing, transfer of taxi ranks to local association as well as improving the public transport infrastructure amongst others. After getting reports from other provinces PEGASYS is expected to conclude its findings and present it on the next National Taxi Lekgotla.



NEW FLEET FOR TRANSPORT INSPECTORATE

The Department has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening law enforcement capacity and promoting road safety across the province. This follows the official handover of a new fleet of patrol vehicles to the Transport Inspectorate by MEC Thulasizwe Thomo, during a law enforcement operation conducted along the N4 in Alkmaar, City of Mbombela.

The event was attended by the Head of Department, Mr. Charles Morolo, senior management members, and various law enforcement stakeholders. The new vehicles will significantly enhance operational efficiency of the Transport Inspectorate, enabling officers to respond swiftly and effectively to road safety challenges throughout the province.

The Transport Inspectorate is a specialised enforcement unit within the Department mandated to uphold compliance with road traffic and transport legislation. Its functions include monitoring public transport operations, enforcing permit and licensing conditions, and ensuring adherence to vehicle safety standards. The unit operates across all districts in Mpumalanga, maintaining a strong presence on major transport corridors and contributing to the reduction of road crashes and fatalities.

In his address, MEC Thomo emphasised that investment in law enforcement resources is an integral part of the Department's strategy to promote safer roads and improve service delivery.



"The procurement of these new patrol vehicles will enhance law enforcement visibility and help ensure the safety of all public transport users on our roads. This brand-new fleet will be deployed to strengthen law enforcement operations along key strategic routes

across the four district offices in the Province," said MEC Thomo.

The handover also forms part of the Department's build-up activities towards the launch of October Transport Month (OTM). The Department will, in due course, unveil its programme of activities for OTM 2025, focusing on initiatives that promote sustainable transport, compliance, and safety on Mpumalanga's road network.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ROADBLOCKS LED BY FEMALE OFFICERS CLAMP DOWN UNLAWFUL OPERATORS

As part of the 2025 Women's Month programme, MEC Thulasizwe Thomo led a joint law enforcement operation that was conducted along the N2 road (Acacia) at Ermelo within the Gert Sibande District during the early hours of the 08th of August 2025.

The female dominated roadblock was conducted by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport's Inspectorate Unit together with the South African Police Services (SAPS). MEC Thomo participated by checking for operating licenses, overloading and roadworthiness of public transport operators. The MEC said it is important that traffic officer remain visible on the roads so that the lives of all road users is safe "It is our duty to ensure that we monitor public transport so that we are able to deal with the culprits who continue to put other people lives at risk on the road"



"The Department together with key critical role players within the Province will intensify our law enforcement operations both around towns and townships in order to ensure the compliance of the National Land Transport Act," said MEC Thomo.

MEC Thomo issued a stern warning to operators who disobey the law that their days are numbered. "We urge all public transport operators to ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy, do not overload and make sure that you always carry the required documents" MEC Thomo pleaded.

During the operation, 98 vehicles were stopped. Out of that number, 34 summons were issued and a further 34 vehicles were impounded. The impounded vehicles were issued for offences ranging with overloading, unroadworthy and operating without operating licences.

REOPENING OF THE P177 ROAD BETWEEN CAROLINA AND CHRISSIESMEER



The MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mr Thulasizwe Thomo has officially reopened the road between Carolina and Chrissiesmeer following the successful completion of a newly constructed in-situ bridge structure.

The previous corrugated metal culvert bridge along the P177 route had collapsed, necessitating urgent intervention by the Department. In response, the reconstruction of the bridge was prioritised to restore connectivity and ensure the safe movement of people and goods between the affected areas.

Despite heavy rainfall on the day, MEC Thomo was joined by Cllr Mngomezulu, the Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality, as well as local councillors, for the official reopening ceremony.

The road serves as a vital link between Msukaligwa Local Municipality and Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, facilitating economic and social interaction across the region.

The newly constructed in-situ bridge, which replaces the old culvert structure, forms part of the Department's ongoing Provincial Culvert Bridge Replacement Programme. The bridge has been designed for greater durability, stability, and safety, ensuring long-term service for road users.

In his remarks, MEC Thomo said *"We are proud of this achievement and remain committed to enhancing our province's road infrastructure network for the benefit of all communities."*

SIGNING OF MOU UNLOCKS POSITIVE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR TVET LEARNERS



Signed, sealed and ready for implementation, this best describes the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Public Works Roads and Transport and Mpumalanga TVET colleges cementing a partnership which promises to unlock opportunities for TVET students. This collaboration will go a long way towards improving the lives of learners who seek experiential training in order to enter the job market.

A delegation from the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, led by the Deputy Director General for Corporate Strategy, Mr Skhumbuzo Mona presided over the signing of the MOU, reasserting the Department's position on promoting skills development as enshrined in the DPSA's policies. *"We are committed towards the use of workplace as an active learning environment. Strategic partnerships*

remain integral to address critical skill gaps. We hope that the partnership will enable learners to gain practical skills in the built environment and work experience, which in turn will improve their employability and career prospects," he explained.

According to a representative from Mpumalanga TVET Colleges, Dr N Balkrishen, Mpumalanga Province has a total of thirty thousand (30 000) TVET students who are studying towards the various fields of business, engineering and occupational programmes. *"This partnership is a step in the right direction as it will bolster the growth of the country's economy, because empowered students will contribute positively towards the improvement of the country's infrastructure. We hope to have similar partnership which will explore the global field of artificial intelligence,"* he added.

DPWI TECHNICAL MINMEC RESOLVED TO LOBBY FOR CENTRALISATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGETS

The Technical MinMec of Public Works and Infrastructure, chaired by the Director-General, Mr. Sifiso Mdakane, and comprising provincial Heads of Department, convened in East London, Eastern Cape in August 2025. The Department was represented by HOD, Mr Charles Morolo.

The meeting reached a far-reaching resolution: to lobby for the consolidation of infrastructure budgets into Public Works and Infrastructure departments at both national and provincial levels. The Technical MinMec undertook an assessment of the sector's contribution to the priorities of the 7th Administration, which include inclusive growth and job creation; poverty reduction and lowering the cost of living as well as building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

Under the leadership of Minister Dean Macpherson, the DPWI has set an ambitious plan to transform South Africa into a hive of construction activity, driving economic recovery, scaling up service delivery, and creating much-needed jobs. This is reinforced by Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana's announcement during the Budget Speech that government will invest approximately R1 trillion in infrastructure over the medium term.

The MinMec resolved to advocate for infrastructure budgets to be centralised under DPWI, the State's implementing agent for infrastructure. To advance this, a task team of technical experts from all provinces has been assembled to draft terms of reference for presentation at the gathering of political principals of Public Works and Infrastructure.



"By centralising infrastructure budgeting, departments such as Education can refocus their energies on their core competencies, delivering quality education, developing curricula, and improving learner outcomes, without being burdened by infrastructure responsibilities. Infrastructure agencies, with specialised technical capacity, will expedite the development of facilities, ensuring that institutions are adequately supported with the physical resources they need," Director-General Mdakane explained the rationale:

The Technical MinMec believes that the initiative will be a game changer in enhancing service

delivery and improving the performance of the State through focused resource allocation and effective inter-departmental collaboration. In addition to structural reforms, the sector committed itself to expediting delivery so that communities experience more construction projects; supporting client departments with improved asset care, maintenance and management and ensuring that public assets are used for the public good. Looking to the future, the sector will also deploy Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to monitor and preserve state infrastructure assets, strengthening efficiency and sustainability.

JOB SEEKERS PIN HOPE ON EPWP, AS UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES INCREASES



Statistic South Africa shows that the country continues to grapple with high unemployment rate, reaching an alarming rate of 32.9% with youth shouldering the burden as the rate of unemployed youth's stands at 45,5%. The current global economic uncertainty further exacerbates the situation due to high tariff trajectory, forcing companies to shut-down. However, the situation is not all doom and gloom, as ordinary citizen pin their hopes on government's bold job creation intervention, Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The programme promises to curb the high unemployment rate through social and infrastructure provision, bridging the gap on joblessness. EPWP's success has not gone unnoticed with national record of 14 million work opportunities across the various sector since the programme was introduced in 2004. Plans are afoot to create at least 5 million work opportunities nationwide during the implementation of EPWP phase V within the next five year

With that in mind, Mpumalanga Province plans to galvanise support from various institutions in the province and contribute more work opportunities thus ensure the national target is realised. The province plans to contribute a total of 191 733 work opportunities and 77 303 Full Time Equivalents with the Public Works, Roads and Transport's target of 59 090 by the end

of 2028/29 financial year, this according to EPWP Phase V business plan.

EPWP Chief Director, Ms Sebenzile Makhanya said that the Department must create at least 7 827 work opportunities during the 2025/26 financial year with the desire to reach the expected goal of 59 090 work opportunities at the end of Phase V. The key focus areas in Phase V will be to massify the programme through the implementation of identified programme of high impact. In addition, strengthen the exit strategies implemented by the programme through partnership with other institutions.

Phase V plans to unlock major overhaul with the repositioning and rebranding, as it plans to move beyond quantity to quality from high impact to sustainability. Additionally, its corporate identity has unveiled two additional colours, yellow and green. This means all EPWP role players are expected to adhere to the National Corporate identity so as to promote, maintain and protect the EPWP brand.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway for the Provincial Kamoso Awards due to take place later this year. The awards were introduced in 2007, where best projects within the various sectors of the EPWP programme are honoured.

EPWP SOCIAL SECTOR BOLSTERS JOB CREATION IN THE PROVINCE



The Expanded Public Works Programme's Social sector is becoming a hub of job creation, compared to the other sectors, with more work opportunities recorded in this sector. More work opportunities have been reported under the community safety programmes which promises to tackle the ever increasing crimes on cybercrime, extorting syndicates, kidnapping and public unrest. The programme promises to be the cornerstone of economic growth, social cohesion and community safety as enshrined in National Development Programme's approach.

This was evident when forty-seven EPWP SASSETA graduates enjoyed the fruits of their hard work when they were handed with certificates during a graduation ceremony in Middelburg, Nkangala District Municipality on the 15th July 2025. The graduates were equipped with the much needed security skills, at the backdrop of escalating figures of crime statistics in the country.

According to the Executive Mayor, Nkangala District, Cllr TD Ngwenya at least more than R32 million was spent towards the initiative. "This is a living expression of what the District Development Model (DDM) envisions, One Plan, One Budget, One District. You are no longer just gatekeepers, you are frontline defenders if our schools, clinics, government offices, businesses, tourist sites and borders, he explained when handing over certificates to graduates. A total of 50 unemployed youth were appointed from all six local municipalities within the Nkangala District.

The National Expanded Public Works Programme which spearheaded the initiative cemented a collaboration with Nkangala District Municipality, Bidvest Protea Coin and Safety and Security SETA, which resulted in the training and employment of participants into the Bidvest Protea Coin company. To date at least 226 EPWP SASSETA participants have completed security training and now permanently employed by Bidvest Protea Coins, since the initiative started in 2017/18 financial year.

EPWP WELISIZWE PARTICIPANTS AWARDED WITH CERTIFICATES

Unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, crime are some of the social-ills which people in the impoverished Vezubuhle, a tiny village outside KwaMhlanga, grapples with on a daily basis. These socio-economic problems are realities which millions of people in rural area have to endure. Government's flagship programme on fighting poverty and unemployment, Expanded Public Works Programme, is the only hope for villagers in pursuit to address the high unemployment rate.

This was evident when the National Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson officiated the certificates handover of EPWP Welisizwe participants at Vezubuhle Hall in KwaMhlanga recently. A total of 160 EPWP participants were awarded with certificated after they participated in the Welisizwe bridge Programme. The programme built bridges in rural communities to ease access to social amenities such as clinics, schools, shops etc.

During his address to the audience, Macpherson explained that EPWP remains an engine to economic growth with the aim to address shortage of skills whilst addressing poverty alleviation. ***"EPWP is a pathway to a long term employment, so people can use their certificates to create their own business and even employ local people as a result grow their economies. It provides opportunities and give people the dignity they deserve,"*** he said.



MPUMALANGA PROVINCE UNVEILS YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES DURING YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION



The month of June in the South African Calendar is a month dedicated for the Youth. It is the youth of 1976 Soweto Uprising which fought against the oppressive education policies, political repression and the socio-economic hardships, which shaped the current political landscape of the country. The youth of 1976 faced an oppressive education system which advocated the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instructions in most black schools, lack of resources and over grounding in classrooms were some of the challenges experienced then. Furthermore, the then Apartheid system, created a hostile environment for students which resulted into 1976 Soweto uprisings, It's been 49 years since the June 16 massacre, now the youth of South Africa is facing another major challenge of high unemployment.

Despite this national setback. Mpumalanga government is working around the clock to avert youth unemployment. *"The Province plans to reduce unemployment rate from 36.2% to 34.7% high than the national average. Over the next five year, we will target economic growth that creates approximately 300 000 additional and sustainable work opportunities. Government will intensify its existing programmes and launch new innovative programme*

in the key economic sectors of the province. We have funded 238 youth owned enterprises at the tune of R257,9 million through the Premier's Youth Development Fund, which is a programme aimed to empower youth, women and people with disabilities," this was announced by the Acting Premier of Mpumalanga, MEC Speedy Mashilo, during the Youth Day Celebration at Mangweni Stadium at Nkomazi Local Municipality.

MEC Thulasizwe Thomo joined other dignitaries to commemorate the youth day. This year's celebration was celebrated under the theme Government departments and entities engaged with young people on opportunities available within the public sector, under the theme 'Skills for the Changing World – Empowerment for Meaningful Economic Participation'. When making remarks on the day MEC Thomo explained: *"We continue to honour 16 June in remembrance of the courageous and sacrifices made by the 1976 generation, whose struggle for equality and access to quality education paved the way for the freedoms we enjoy today. He added that it is our collective responsibility to keep their legacy alive investing on youth empowerment."*

MEC THOMO EXTENDS A HELPING HAND TO A CENTER FOR DISABLED IN HONOUR OF MADIBA

The former statesman, Nelson Mandela once made a call to humankind to eradicate poverty and in one of his address he indicated the following: *"Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that great generation, Let your greatness blossom."* A great generation with a mission to eradicate poverty and restore human dignity is what MEC Thomo displayed during the provincial Mandela Month celebration. He joined



forces with other provincial departments renovating a dilapidated disability center called Vuhlayiselo Disability Center at Mbhumba trust.

The renovations constitute painting and fixing broken windows to give honour and dignity to persons with disability. MEC Thomo switched from his formal suits into overalls by painting walls of the center, which has been a source of hope for local communities. According to MEC we need to emulate the former statesman in his quest to change life of the poor, hence we refurbish this structure to restore the dignity of people living in this center. The constitution states that every citizen of the country has a right to a safe and proper shelter, we therefore adhere to this basic principle as enshrined in the constitution.

During the day, MEC Thomo donated JOJO tank, wheelchair and dignity pads to the center. He was joined by the Council Speaker of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, Cllr Busisiwe Ruth Raganya with Departmental staff from Bohlabela District.

GET TO KNOW THE WOMEN BEHIND THE WHEEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY: MS THIBILE NOMCEBO HLATSHWAYO, ROAD WORKS FOREMAN



What motivated you to join the construction and road maintenance field?

I was motivated by my passion for the job and the pride I take in building and maintaining our roads. Even though the work is physically demanding, I've always believed in pushing myself beyond limits. I also wanted to show that growth is possible, no matter where you start. Every challenge I faced as an Operator pushed me to aim higher, and being promoted to Foreman showed me that hard work and consistency truly pay off.

What challenges have you encountered in your journey, and how did you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenge I faced was the physical exhaustion. The work is tough and I would often come home completely drained. Safety was another real concern. There were times when I had to grade roads in areas far from homes and I would feel scared especially knowing criminals could target us for diesel theft or worse. As a woman, I had to stay alert and work closely with my team so that we always looked out for each other. I overcame these challenges by staying focused on my goals, speaking up when it mattered and refusing to let fear stop me from doing what I love.

What has been your proudest achievement in this role?

My proudest moment was when I led my very

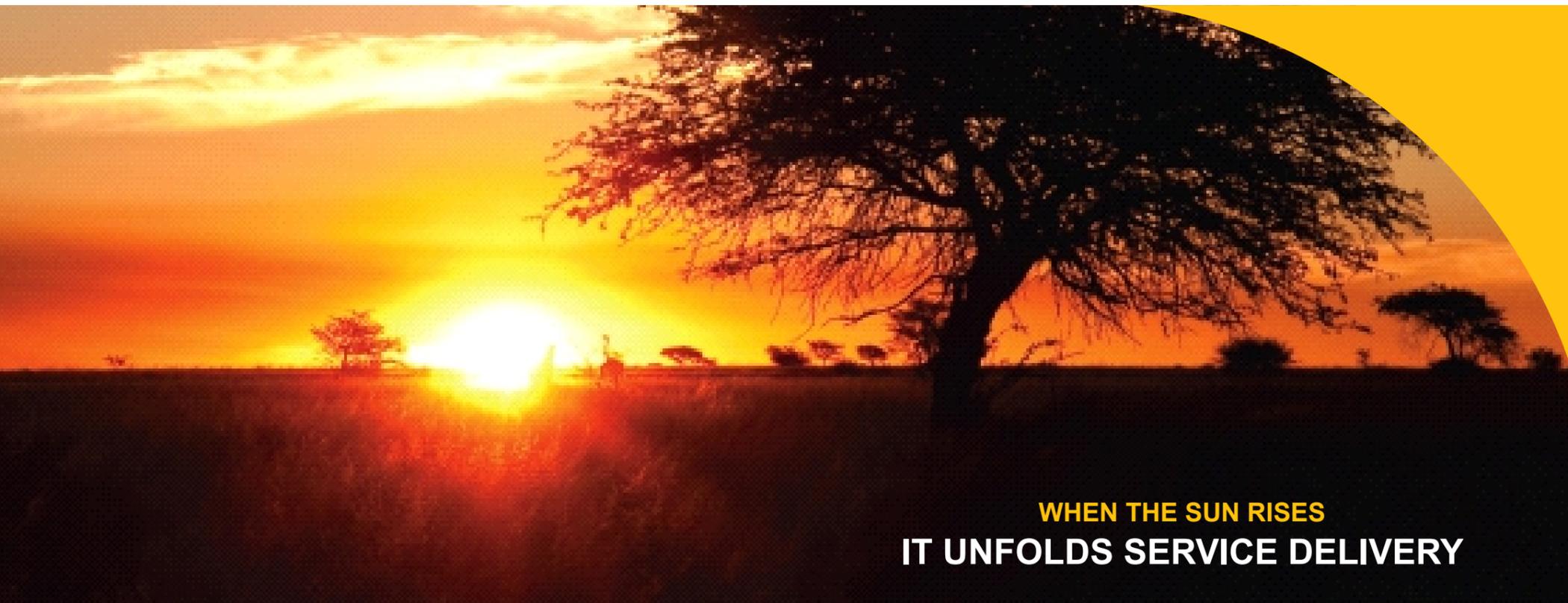
first project from start to finish. I managed the site, coordinated the team and delivered quality work on time. Seeing the final result and knowing that I had led that process gave me a deep sense of accomplishment. It also made me proud to stand as a woman in a leadership role in a space where that is still rare.

How do you lead and inspire your team on-site?

I lead with respect, consistency and clear communication. For me, leadership is about action and how you treat people, not about gender. I make sure I understand the work on the ground because I've done it myself. I don't shy away from making decisions or taking responsibility and I always lead by example. Over time, my team has come to respect me not just as a leader, but as someone who truly understands what it takes to get the job done.

What message would you like to share with young women considering this career path?

My message is simple: don't let fear hold you back. This field needs strong, determined women and you have every right to be here. Yes, the work is tough, but it's also very rewarding. You'll gain skills, confidence and resilience. Believe in yourself, stay focused and remember that your presence alone is already breaking barriers. You don't have to be perfect, you just have to start.



**WHEN THE SUN RISES
IT UNFOLDS SERVICE DELIVERY**

TRANSPORT INSPECTORS CELEBRATE HERITAGE DAY WITH PRIDE AND UNITY



On September 23, Ehlanzeni District Transport Inspectors joined the rest of the nation in celebrating Heritage Month - a time to honour the rich cultural diversity that defines who we are. The men and women in uniform, decided to wear their traditional attire with pride and came together at Stinkhout Office in Mbombela to mark the occasion with music, food, and unity. The day served not only as a celebration of heritage but also as a powerful reminder of the shared values that underpin their work: respect, responsibility, and service to the public.

From Swati beadwork and Xhosa prints to Tswana traditional dress, Ndebele patterns, and hearty African cuisine, the event showcased the diversity within the inspectorate itself, demonstrating that professionalism and cultural pride go hand in hand.

“As Transport Inspectors, we serve people from all walks of life every day. Today reminds us that while we wear the same uniform, we carry many cultures and that makes us stronger as a team. Celebrating our heritage is not just for a day or a month, but an everyday journey. We honour our roots, uphold our culture and move proudly as Africans,” said Ms Nozipho Khoza.

The Department applauded the initiative, highlighting how embracing heritage in the workplace fosters unity, morale and respect among colleagues and the communities they serve.



CONTACT DETAILS

HEAD OFFICE

Corporate Services, Strategic Planning & Finance

Rhino Building, 7 Government Boulevard,
Riverside Park, Ext. 2
City of Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 6696
Fax: 013 766 8471

Building Infrastructure and Transport Management
Mbombela Square
City of Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 752 4593
Fax: 013 752 4043

EPWP, Property Management, Government Motor Transport, & Transport Infrastructure
16 Hope Street
City of Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 8594/8502

Operating Licensing Board

Mbombela Square
City of Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 0833

DISTRICT OFFICES

Bohlabela District
Private Bag X1313
Thulamahashe
1365
Tel: 013 773 8300
Fax: 013 773 0760

Gert Sibande District
Private Bag X9034
Ermelo
2350
Tel: 017 801 4000/4600
Fax: 017 801 4120

Ehlanzeni District
Private Bag X11226
Mbombela
1200
Tel: 013 762 5600
Fax: 013 753 7221

Nkangala District
Private Bag X4018
KwaMhlanga
1022
Tel: 013 947 2593
Fax: 013 947 3779

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