

MEDIA BRIEFING

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma | Pietermaritzburg | 26 September 2025

We wish to welcome members of the fourth estate to the press briefing.

We also extend our greetings to the viewers who are following us through the mainstream media and other social media platforms.

We have convened the press briefing to reflect on public transport matters that affect more than 12.4 million residents of this province and those that visit KwaZulu-Natal as tourists, on business or those visiting their loved ones.

THE ABUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS

The first issue we want to focus on today is the abuse of blue lights.

On 19 September we had successful multi-disciplinary roadblock in Umhlanga. Our highly efficient, energetic and dedicated team from Road Traffic Inspectorate stopped a convoy transporting the Deputy Mayor of Nongoma Local Municipality.

Upon searching the vehicles, the RTI discovered they were in violation of regulation 176 of the National Road Traffic Act (93 of 1996). RTI found the following:-

1. One Blue Light: reserved for Traffic Officers, Members of the South African Police Service and Members of the SANDF Military Police.
2. One Green Light: used on disaster management vehicles.
3. Two White Lights: used by registered security vehicles and only driven by a security officer.

The lights were confiscated and a warning was issued to the drivers after they pleaded ignorance of the legal framework regarding identification lights.

They claimed to be security guards but failed to provide evidence.

Our RTI has subsequently been contacted by the Acting Municipal Manager from Nongoma Local Municipality.

He confirmed that the drivers were transporting the Deputy Mayor and that they were not aware of the legal framework regarding identification lights.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the media, we wish to announce that our energetic and efficient team from RTI has been mandated to be firm against the illegal use of blue lights or any other lights.

We will not fold our arms. We want to protect innocent motorists and the people of this province against the emergency of the "Blue Light Mafia."

We will embark on an awareness campaign aimed at educating members of the public about the dos and don'ts of Blue Light and other lights.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ON OUR ROADS TO INTENSIFY

Flowing from above, our RTI team from Park Rynie arrested a speeding driver who was rushing to King Shaka International Airport.

He was transporting the Deputy Speaker of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Local Municipality in Bizana.

We have arrested a senior prosecutor, two police officer, a correctional services officer, IT Specialist and many other professionals.

As indicated last week, the arrest of 293 motorists for drunk driving, since August 15 is a clear indication of the success of Alufakwa – Zero Tolerance and No Nonsense Campaign.

We pause to indicate that I mandated RTI to intensify road patrols, stop and check and multidisciplinary operations involving South African Police Service, traffic departments in municipalities and various role-players.

We want to ensure the safety of motorists using more than 54 000 kilometres of our road networks.

THE STATE OF SCHOLAR TRANSPORT IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Over the past few weeks, the people of KwaZulu-Natal and the whole country focused on the state of scholar transport.

For the purpose of this briefing, we wish to separate government subsidized scholar transport and private scholar transport operated by taxi associations and individuals.

Subsidized Scholar Transport

Despite limited resources, we wish to affirm our commitment to ensure that as the Department of Transport we play a leading role, alongside the Department of Education, in terms of unleashing a new generation of professionals and leaders to take the country forward.

Every day of the week, we are seized with activities aimed at ensuring access to quality education by providing safe, decent, effective, integrated and sustainable learner transport services.

Our focus is on learners who live in rural areas who experience transportation challenges in accessing schools.

Currently, there are eight four (84) service providers contracted by both the Department of Transport and Department of Education. The Total Number of contracted vehicles that provides learner transport are as follows:-

- a. 244 Minibus taxis
- b. 609 Buses
- c. 19 Midi-buses

There are 434 schools and 77 369 learners currently benefitting across the province. We have a total number of 234 907 learners still in need of this service and 157 538 learners on the waiting list.

The approved Learner Transport Budget for the 2025/2026 financial year is R343 million.

This amount includes an estimated escalation of 2.8% effective from July 2025, in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

By the end of June 2025, the expenditure was already sitting at R262 million.

We wish to express our deepest appreciation to the members of portfolio committee on Transport for the support.

The Department appeared before the committee on Tuesday.

Members of the committee, across all political parties, demonstrated maturity and spoke with one voice.

They expressed their unwavering commitment to support us as we seek more resources for the Scholar Transport Programme.

From September 2025 to March 2026, the total funding required is R374 million.

We note with a high sense of appreciation the suggestion by committee members for a meeting involving Portfolio committees on Finance, Education and Transport.

In the meantime, we wish to announce that the Department will be advertising a new bid for service providers to provide a scholar transport.

As an executive authority, I expect all categories of staff to comply with supply chain management processes in the Department when procuring goods and services.

We take comfort in knowing that checks and balances that were put in place by the 4th, 5th and 6th administrations are still working.

Bid committees and Bid Appeals Tribunal are such checks and balances. They are effective in terms of eliminating any fraud and corruption associated with supply chain management.

Importantly, more than ensuring a faster dispute resolution process than a traditional court, the previous administrations established bid tribunals to promote fairness and transparency in the procurement of goods and services.

We are highlighting these issues because the bid for new services which was advertised on the 07 March 2024 and closed on the 15 April 2024 was nullified.

We have a responsibility, collectively, to ensure that we account for every cent spent and that we have good and clean governance.

Private Scholar Transport

Today, we have set aside time for a Prayer and a Memorial Service for the learners who died in a horrific accident involving scholar transport.

We remain saddened and shocked by the death of five learners – all from Mbali Township.

We have asked religious leaders and the community at large to come together and pray for the learners, teachers and families of the following departed learners:-

1. Nomalanga Ndawonde (she will be laid to rest this weekend)
2. Mthobisi Khambule
3. Omphile Aphelele Mbhense
4. Luthando Zaca

5. Zanoluhle Zanolhando Morha

I wish to reiterate that safety of learners is a collective responsibility.

As we are mourning, we wish to avoid, at all cost, any finger-pointing.

We wish to remind all role-players of their responsibilities:-

Policies, Permits and Enforcement: As the Department of Transport we make policies and provide operating licenses for scholar transport, which involves transporting students to and from school. Following the horrific accidents, we have undertaken to enforce compliance with regulations.

On the other hand, I have mandated the Acting Head of the Department to ensure that all relevant directorates work with municipalities and law enforcement agencies conduct enforcement.

Unroadworthy cars involved in scholar transport must be removed from our roads to prevent the loss of innocent lives.

Audit of Scholar Transport in Pietermaritzburg: I have mandated the Acting Head of the Department to work with municipal managers to assemble teams of officials from the Department, Department of Education and municipalities to do an audit of private scholar transport in all municipalities under UMgungundlovu District.

The work, which will start in October the transport month, will be undertaken in collaboration with taxi associations and the South African National Taxi Council in KwaZulu-Natal.

Parents, guardians and School Governing Bodies: We undertake to work with parents and school governing bodies. In particular, we request parents to verify the condition of vehicles, the driver's permit, and avoid overloaded vehicles to guarantee safety of children.

Fraudulent issuing of roadworthiness certificates: In the past few weeks we announced our partnership with the Vehicle Testing Association (VTA).

The association is a member of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI) and represents the private vehicle testing stations involved in the testing and issuing of roadworthy certificates in terms of the National Road Traffic Act and SABS 10047.

A technical team from the Department has had sessions of engagement with the Association as part of setting up clear legal framework to formalize our partnership.

I have mandated the Acting Head of the Department to co-ordinate the work of the technical team involving Motor Transport Services and the Road Traffic Inspectorate.

We want to comply with all national policies and legal prescripts. The first report must reach my desk within the second week of Transport Month.

Critically, the team will work with the National Department of Transport and the Road Traffic Management Corporation's National Traffic Anti-Corruption Unit.

We want to root out the issuing of fraudulent roadworthy certificates by testing vehicle stations from other provinces to KZN vehicles.

These certificates are issued without KZN vehicles being physically tested in those testing stations.

As previously stated, our main focus is to collaborate with the Vehicle Testing Association (VTA) to do the following: -

1. Strengthen legislation governing the taxi and scholar transport industry, with clear provisions on driver vetting, vehicle standards, and operational oversight.
2. Enforcing stricter compliance and accountability measures across the province, supported by transparent reporting and independent audits.
3. Require biannual Certificates of Roadworthiness (COF) for all heavy passenger vehicles, replacing the current annual requirement.
4. Ensure that all minibuses are inspected within the KZN province, at accredited municipal or private testing, and in alignment with their designated route permits.

As we draw towards conclusion, we wish to announce that next week Tuesday, 29 September 2025 we will unveil our Transport Month Activities.

On this day, we will celebrate the graduation of the first and largest cohort of RTI Officers. More than 700 guests will attend this ceremony, which will take the form of an open-air parade accompanied by a performance to be rendered by the SAPS Band.

We will confer traffic diplomas upon all successful candidates. We will encourage them to uphold highest standards of ethics, professionalism and to be the enforcers of road safety measures.

They will be deployed to various regions to be part of the strengthening of the public transport system.

As the Department we continue with speed to repair, maintain and build new roads and bridges across the province.

Currently rehabilitation projects committed on the ground amounts to R14.6 billion with anticipated outputs of five million, two hundred thousand square meters (5,2 million m²) over the next MTEF period.

We are increasing the lifespan of our road networks through resealing.

Reseal commitments are at R666 million with anticipated outputs of nine hundred three thousand six hundred square meters (903,6 thousand m²) over the next MTEF period.

We are also upgrading gravel roads to surface roads in various corners of the province working with Amakhosi.

Throughout the month of October, we will engage with key stakeholders and demonstrate our commitment to use the department of transport as the catalyst for the growth of different sectors of the economy such as tourism and agriculture.

Lastly, as the Department of Transport, during the first quarter of this year, we created 45 722 jobs across the province. This is a clear demonstration of our committed to creating a prosperous KwaZulu-Natal

I thank you

Enquiries

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