



**SPEECH (NOTES) BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. B.H. CELE AT THE MEMORIAL
SERVICE AT BULWER PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER
2005.**

All Protocol Observed.

- Gatherings of this nature, especially when children are involved, are certainly among the saddest and most difficult moments for us at the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport.
- Today we are reminded about the death of five school learners from Bulwer Primary School, who were killed at about 15h40 last Friday, 28th October 2005 in a road crash involving a 4x4 Jeep Cherokee on the R617 between Bulwer and Howick.
- According to reports received, this crash occurred when the driver of the Jeep lost control of his vehicle and veered across the road, ploughing into a group of twelve school learners and a mother who were on their way home from school.
- Four learners (all females) passed away at the scene of the crash and one learner later passed away at the Edendale Hospital. Seven others sustained multiple injuries and were admitted to the Edendale Hospital.
- All these learners are from Xosheyakhe Location near Bulwer.

- The driver of the Jeep, Mr. Mendez Ferrera (60 years old) was arrested and appeared in the Bulwer Magistrates Court on Friday night on five counts of culpable homicide. He was released on R1 500 bail and he appeared again in court on Monday when the case was remanded.
- On Monday this week, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education Ms. Ina Cronje and I visited Bulwer Primary School to support the educators and pupils who are mourning the loss of their colleagues.
- We also visited the scene of the crash as well as the Edendale Hospital where the surviving children are recuperating.
- A team of counsellors from the Education Department visited the school and are also assisting in counselling the affected family members.
- I am grief-stricken each time I have to witness the pain of family members at gatherings such as these, and no amount of words are sufficient enough to comfort the families during these difficult moments.
- Nevertheless, I would like to express my sincere condolences to all the bereaved families during this time of extreme grief.
- The names of the deceased are as follows:
 - Sumkheliswa Mkhize (14 years);
 - Zanele Mbambo (12 years);
 - Thokozile Bhengu (12 years);
 - Nozipho Zitha (14 years) ; and
 - Nonjabulo Bhengu (6 years).

“May their souls rest in peace?”

- At present, five counts of culpable homicide are being investigated by the SAPS and investigations into this crash are continuing.
- The safety of our children is one of the key priorities of our government.

- I therefore want to repeat myself to all drivers to comply with all road rules or face the full might of the law.
- As political head of this department, I will continue to play the role that I am mandated to play, and champion “100% compliance” 24 hours, 7 days a week and 365 days a year in order to ensure that we have safer roads in our province.
- I will also continue to sustain the ideals of “Defending the Weak”, which include defending that child, woman or man killed on the road because the driver was drunk, moving at a high speed or simply did not obey the rules of the road.
- One of the key mandated goals of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is to create a safe road environment through the reduction of road crashes.
- Over the years the Department has successfully pioneered the Asiphephe (Let Us Be Safe) road safety campaign. As part of this campaign, during December last year I introduced our new slogan, “from Zero Tolerance to 100% Compliance”, as well as “Omela eKhaya” (Get Thirst At Home).
- The Asiphephe campaign has reinforced the Department’s enforcement programme as well as provided road safety education in schools and communities throughout the province. Community Road Safety Councils have been established throughout the province to ensure that the Department addresses road safety issues identified by the respective communities themselves.
- As part of our efforts to invariably reduce the number of road crashes, earlier this year we launched the “KEEP LEFT, PASS RIGHT” road safety campaign, and just last week we launched the “NO TO FAKE LICENCES” campaign.
- In conclusion, we as government will continue to do everything possible to assist the affected families in whatever way we can during these difficult moments.

THANK YOU.

