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Department:

Transport

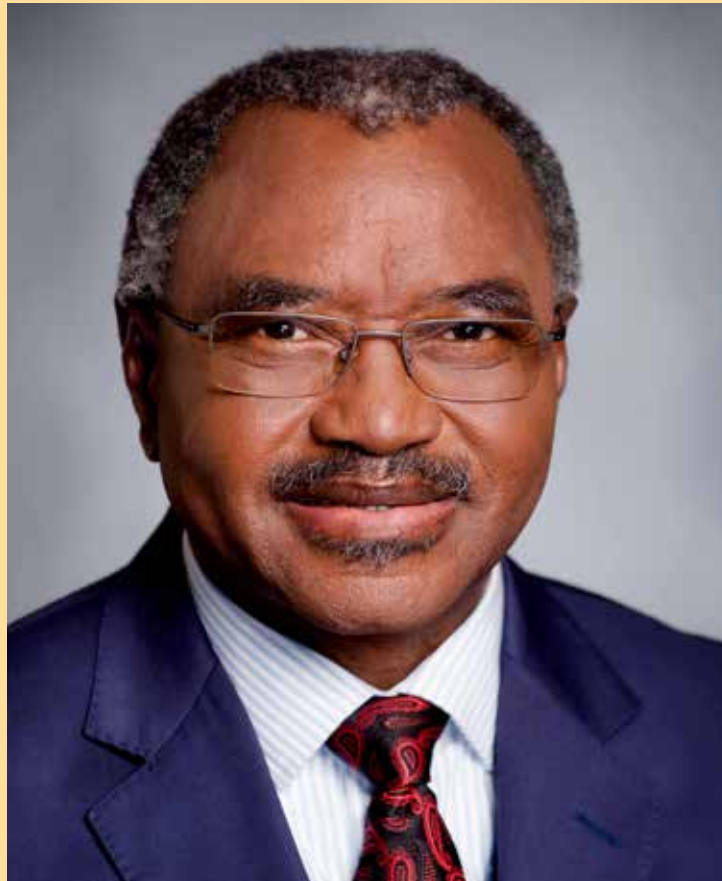
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**



## BUDGET VOTE SPEECH

2015 - 2016





**MR. T.W. MCHUNU**  
MEC for Transport,  
Community Safety and Liaison



**BUDGET VOTE SPEECH**  
**2015 - 2016**

Presented to the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature  
on Thursday, 30 April 2015

**Budget Vote 12 Speech 2015/16 presented to the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature by MEC for Transport,  
Community Safety and Liaison, Honourable T.W. Mchunu  
Pietermaritzburg  
Thursday, 30 April 2015**

- Madam Speaker, Honourable Lydia Johnson;
- The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Honourable Senzo Mchunu;
- Deputy Speaker, Honourable Dr. Meshack Radebe;
- Honourable Members of the Provincial Executive;
- Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;
- Your Worships, the Mayors and Councillors of Municipalities;
- The Director-General;
- Heads of Departments and State agencies;
- Traditional leaders present;
- Members of the Interfaith;
- Officials of Government Departments;
- Distinguished guests, and members of the media;
- Fellow citizens.

## Introduction

Madam Speaker, I rise to table Vote 12, the budget policy statement for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport.

Honourable members, we remain extremely concerned about the continuing road carnage hence our decision to keep the theme of **“Road safety is our collective responsibility”**, for the next five years.

It is our considered view, honourable members, that until such time that we have a national consciousness of the devastating impact of road crashes and fatalities, we cannot rest. The gains of our hard-won freedom can never be fully realised until citizens accept that safety, on our roads and in communities, is paramount and is their responsibility. Our safety is inseparable from our ability to enjoy our rights and pursue socio-economic prosperity.

## The Year of the Freedom Charter

Integrally, our celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, as ably explained by President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation Address, will have meaning when we take full responsibility for our actions.

President Jacob Zuma declared 2015 as the “Year of the Freedom Charter and Unity in Action to Advance Economic Freedom”.

“It is the year of going the extra mile in building a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa,” asserted President Zuma. In his State of the Province Address, our honourable Premier emphasised the importance of building on the progress already made, by implementing programmes and projects to propel us on our trajectory to 2030.

Madam Speaker; our R9.3 billion budget allocation for 2015/16 will be invested to massively contribute to expanding roads and

transportation infrastructure. We will do this while creating jobs, helping eradicate poverty, reducing inequality and driving radical socio-economic transformation. And indeed, these are national priorities best articulated in the ideals of the Freedom Charter!

## An Accelerated Socio-Economic Transformation Agenda

Honourable members; our commitment to move KwaZulu-Natal forward will be accelerated as part of the radical socio-economic transformation agenda. The socio-economic transformation programme is aimed primarily at changing the face of the economy in terms of our Roads Infrastructure and Subsidised Public Transport Services. It is fundamentally about increasing the participation in the mainstream economy of the previously excluded and largely Black African majority.

We intend therefore to waste no effort as we embark on this path. Your support as members of this House, and the public at large, will be crucial.

Importantly, in terms of our Roads Infrastructure programme, we will continue to beef up our delivery capacity by leveraging appropriate external expertise where required. Our emphasis, however, will be to ensure that there is a fair and equitable distribution of work and wealth. This should also ensure that the principles of improving budget and service delivery project management take centre stage. Similarly, as a department we are helping to strengthen capacity of emerging contractors in the targeted groupings for empowerment through training.

In terms of our Subsidised Public Transport Services, we will ensure that contracts held in this area reflect the demographics of the country. The programme focuses on 23 contracts out of

**R9.3 billion  
budget for 2015/16  
to expand roads  
and transportation  
infrastructure.**

a total of 37 contracts in the province – of which 18 will achieve empowerment objectives in this process.

Notably, the rest of the contracts are in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, which is currently implementing its Integrated Public Transport Network, and Ugu District Municipality, which has already implemented its empowerment programme. This latter process will result in an estimated R206 million (out of R592 million total subsidy for the 23 contracts) transferred into the hands of African operators in the financial year 2015/16, and grow to R246 million (out of R738 million) in 2019/20.

### Progress made

Honourable members; our department has made great strides in the past five years, working to fulfil the strategic objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP).

I am happy to report that during the 2009 to 2014 term of government, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport exceeded our target of reducing the baseline of our poor to very poor road network, from 52 percent to 45 percent. We are currently sitting at 44 percent, which puts us amongst the top performers in the country. We achieved this by constructing 26 kilometres of new tarred roads, meaning completely new roads from nowhere. We upgraded 457 kilometres, against a target of 397 kilometres, of gravel to tar roads. We also rehabilitated (in other words re-tarred) 1 859 kilometres. We also resealed more than 10 million square metres of our road network. In addition, we constructed 1 569 kilometres of new gravel roads.

Furthermore, we built 28 vehicle and 61 pedestrian bridges. We did this while prioritising the development of roads infrastructure in previously neglected, and therefore currently largely underdeveloped, rural communities.

We will not hold on to the past imbalances, but all the same we should remain conscious of how they have created the current backlog.

Based on our existing 7 400 kilometres of tarred roads, we estimate that it would require government to invest approximately R17 billion to maintain. This is apart from building new roads.

That is why in the next five years, we will continue to balance the building of new roads and bridges in rural communities with maintaining existing infrastructure, as follows:

- We will build **1 090** kilometres of new gravel roads;
- We will also build **374** kilometres of new tarred roads;
- **65** pedestrian bridges;
- **35** new major vehicular bridges; and
- Maintain **32, 890** kilometres of our entire roads network.

Notably, we will do this in the midst of now well-documented financial constraints. With the reduction of the provincial equitable share by 0.3 percent, the Department of Transport saw a reduction of R4.5 million in this financial year 2015/16. The effect of the updated population statistics (as per Census update) resulted in R204 million reduction in the department's budget for 2015/16). However, the total effect of budget cuts since 2009 to date have had a negative effect on the

department's budget of R794 million in 2015/16.

### Road Safety

Madam Speaker, as I have already indicated, safety on our roads remains a major challenge which requires our collective effort. The high levels of fatalities are a serious burden to the society and a drain on our fiscus.

Last August we called on government to lead from the front. To this end, we are advancing with the development of a policy position upon which we will engage all stakeholders. This position paper will go through all necessary channels of government and public consultation. Ultimately, we wish to see strengthened laws and regulations that punish those who break the law.

Last month's passing of the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Collins Chabane, and his two protectors, Sergeants Lesiba Sekele and Lawrence Lentsoane, is a yet another sad reminder that safety on the road is everybody's business.

KwaZulu-Natal as a province should also lead from the front in drastically changing the mind-set on road safety.

As citizens of this province, we should derive nothing but shame from the fact that in the last few, busy holiday periods, our province has consistently recorded the highest road crashes and fatalities.

During the recent Easter Holidays, for example, we lost more than 50 lives in just one weekend!

If anything, this figure should wake us up from the slumber of carelessness and collective irresponsibility.

In this regard, we continue to advocate for a collective effort from all stakeholders

including government, business sector, the labour movement, churches, the freight industry, the public transport sector (buses and taxis), the driving schools industry, private vehicle owners, cyclists and passengers. Individually and collectively we should define, agree, commit to, and institutionalise specific areas of responsibilities and a Code of Conduct.

As we mark the last five years of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), let all the people of KwaZulu-Natal become true road safety ambassadors.

### M-13 and other red spots

Further to our previous reports on measures to improve safety on provincial red spot zones including M-13 (Hillcrest to Pinetown), R34 and R66 between Melmoth, eShowe and eMpangeni, I am pleased to announce that the department has carried out necessary assessments.

In terms of the M-13, law enforcement incorporating RTI and eThekweni Metro Police was intensified, restriction times (06H00 to 09H00 in the morning and 16H00 to 18H30 in the afternoon) in which trucks can pass through were increased and tonnage decreased to a maximum of 16-tons. In addition, designs for the road's capacity improvement will be finalised this financial year.

Interim safety improvements of the R66 and R34 intersection at the bottom of the Nkwalini Hill will also commence this financial year with other safety improvements on the R66

**457 kilometres of roads upgraded from gravel to tar and 1 859 re-tarred between 2009 and 2014.**



towards Melmoth, following in coming years.

### **Bakkies Transporting School Learners**

Madam Speaker; we all recall the painful accident which claimed the lives of eight (8) school learners from Senzokuhle Primary School in eMbaleni township, right here in Pietermaritzburg, as well as other areas where accidents involving learners have occurred in this province.

The scenes of this horrendous accident are still fresh in our memories.

The traumatic pain felt by parents, families, teachers and fellow learners, is a poignant reminder of the challenges and infrastructure backlogs our society continues to face.

As such, a policy regulating the transportation of learners, coupled with legislative imperatives and socio-economic conditions that give rise to the use of bakkies by learners, were tabled to the Provincial Executive. Subsequently, the Provincial Executive has directed the Departments of Transport, Education and Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, to work together to address this challenge. In our collaborative process we have interacted with the KwaZulu-Natal Scholar Transport operators who have now joined South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO). Going forward, a joint programme to reach out to all scholar transport operators across all districts will be implemented.

In the meantime, parents and School Governing Bodies must play their role by ensuring that their children use safer and approved modes of transport to avoid further loss of innocent lives.

### **RTI Commission's Recommendations Update**

Madam Speaker, the regrettable and unfortunate incident of December 2012, remains a painful disaster that should never happen again.

Further to the Premier's release of the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the recruitment process of the Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI), the department started acting on them.

Already, we can report the following progress:

- There are 19 applicants who were hospitalised and suffered trauma, that have since been compensated with R10 000.00 each;
- A payment of R100, 000.00 in compensation has been paid to one of the applicants who was hospitalised for a long period of time;
- Specific matters with possible criminal implications have been referred to the SAPS for further investigation;
- Investigation into the institution of internal disciplinary proceedings still continues and is being conducted by an independent party; and
- The development of the RTI recruitment policy is in progress.

We also appointed actuaries to assist with the valuation and determination of the loss of support claims, and sourced

independent legal opinion to help with claims payment and analysis of the legal standing of the claimants.

We do realise that this process has taken longer than anticipated, however, it has to be done thoroughly and correctly to bring about closure to the affected families.

### **National and Provincial Priorities**

Our mandate is best carried out in tight alignment with the national and provincial priorities, as spelt out in the NDP, PGDP and local government plans. All these plans are aimed at promoting seamless economic growth and improve planning and coordination across government spheres.

### **Job Creation**

As the Department of Transport we will continue to play our part in job creation targeting mainly the youth and women. In the financial year 2015/16, we intend creating more than 69 000 job opportunities – a figure that will amount to 381 700 job opportunities over the next five years, especially through our Expanded Public Works programme.

**We will create 381 700 job opportunities through EPWP in the next five years.**

### **Rural Development**

Our programme of putting rural communities at the centre of development plans will also continue. Already, more than 60 percent of our budget goes to rural development as part of the implementation of "Operation Kushunquthuli" and other programmes. The department has in the past years constructed tarred roads, built causeways and bridges across all districts and in the most underprivileged of communities.

These have helped connect rural communities with important amenities such as schools, clinics, public transport facilities, shopping centres, pension pay-points and economic activity hubs.

### **Youth Skills Development Programmes**

Our programmes to expand technical skills is forging ahead with the 82 young people who have graduated with degrees and diplomas in engineering fields such as construction, civil, surveying and transportation. This is 12 additional graduates from the last reported figure of 70 graduates.

A total of 24 candidate engineers, technologists and technicians have been placed in the department's Technology Transfer Centre to acquire in-service training as part of fulfilling their graduation requirements and bursary contractual obligations.

We have also taken on a further 43 interns and 24 in-service graduates in the current year, adding to our 168 candidate technicians who are working on contract in the department.

The department has formed a partnership with the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) and signed a Memorandum of Understanding to fund the Heavy Equipment Mechanical Apprenticeship Programme starting this month. This programme will place 25 apprentices across the department's regions to address skills shortages.

**We have produced 82 engineering graduates from our internal bursary programme.**

This is in line with Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande's declaration of the Decade of the Artisan (2014 – 2024).

In addition, our Adult Education and Training programme continues to produce good results with more than 2 000 employees having gone through it.

## Health

Our increased focus on health will build on the existing Employee Health and Wellness programme, which has raised employee awareness about chronic diseases, including HIV and AIDS, Cancer as well as TB.

In partnership with the Department of Health and other stakeholders, we will extend this to address non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and depression. Our internal clinic attendance already records attendance of more than 2 000 employees monthly.

For us saving people's lives on our roads also means escalating Mobile Health programmes that extend awareness to taxi ranks, road blocks and other platforms closer to where people live.

## Fighting Corruption

The Department of Transport tackles fraud and corruption within its ranks. Working with the Provincial Internal Audit Services, Forensic Investigation Unit and other law enforcement agencies is yielding results.

We will rid our department of corrupt officials who collude with suppliers to loot government and ensure that we get value for money. In this regard, several members of staff are currently facing disciplinary processes and some have been dismissed or resigned.

Our Internal Control and Risk Management's directorate already has 16 Compliance Officers who have been hired to ensure that all members of staff comply with government laws and regulations in order to prevent fraud and corruption.

These officers are responsible for conducting awareness campaigns and compliance inspections to ensure adherence to the Public Finance Management Act.

Furthermore, they assist directorates with risk management, implementation of audit action plans, establishing and maintenance of new internal control measures to ensure that government resources are used efficiently.

## National Infrastructure Projects

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is strategically located as a gateway to the rest of the African Continent and the world. With the expansion of the Durban harbour and the Richards Bay port, our province remains the strategic centre of activity for imported and exported goods.

There are major roads which have also been identified to connect South Africa with other neighbouring countries, which will improve economic trade and tourism. These include:

- **Sani Pass (Main road P318)** which links South Africa and Lesotho and serves as a trade and economic conduit between the two countries. The steep gravel 33

kilometre long road, extends from Himeville to the Lesotho border. The first phase of 14 kilometres has been completed, and work will soon commence on the second phase of constructing 19 kilometres.

- **John Ross Highway (Main road P496)** is a busy highway that links Empangeni and Richards Bay. This strategic route serves the second largest harbour in Africa and carries in excess of 20 000 vehicles a day.
- **The R102 and main road P2-1&2 (R102)** are located in Mount Edgecombe linking King Shaka International Airport and KwaDukuza.

These roads also provide a link to the Dube Trade Port. The airport is part of government's overall strategy of furthering Durban's position at the helm of international trade.

Furthermore, we continue to play our coordinating role in the planning working group of programmes involving Transnet, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, SANRAL, Dube Trade Port and municipalities. It is in our best interest as a province to ensure that Strategic Infrastructure Projects are implemented successfully to address road network congestion particularly on the N3 corridor and move freight to rail. The implementation of projects including the Dig-Out Port and Aerotropolis depends largely on successful stakeholder consultations and we will play our role as per the framework by Cabinet.

## Programme 1: Administration

**We will rid the department of corrupt officials, insist on clean governance and value for money.**

Enhanced service delivery to citizens depends upon a clean, accountable, efficient and effective administration system. The allocation of R296.2 million for administration is aimed at supporting the enabling machinery for service delivery.

Our organisational restructuring is almost complete, and the focus will now be to fill the rest of the critical posts. Already 486 posts

have been filled out of the 850 posts identified as critical and approved for filling at the end of 2012.

Over and above the critical posts, a total of 424 appointments to advertised posts were finalised during the last financial year.

A further 133 posts not on the critical list were advertised during the last financial year, and processes are underway to fill them.

All of these posts are filled while ensuring that we improve our employment equity.

Women of all races occupying posts at Senior Management Service levels increased from 50 percent to 54.28 percent between 2009 and 2015. In the same period, employment of women in the entire department has risen from 39.07 percent to 45.81 percent. Our efforts to bolster our performance in terms of employment of people with disabilities are forging ahead, albeit from a low base. Currently, employees with disabilities make up 0.69 percent of the total workforce.

The restructuring and transformation processes have served to ensure that we skill up for the future while meeting national and provincial priorities.

Of greater and strategic interest for this department would be an escalated focus on clean governance, which is manifested by the sustainable achievement of clean audits.

## Programme 2: Transport Infrastructure

Improving road infrastructure is central to the development of the provincial economy. We are also convinced that continuing to invest the bulk of our budget into the existing infrastructure will improve maintenance and reduce the backlog in terms of ailing roads and bridges. As such, **R6.8 billion** of the total **R9.3 billion** budget will be invested in the transport infrastructure programme.

More than R3.5 billion is allocated for maintenance while slightly more than R2.9 billion is allocated to the construction of new projects.

### Projects to be completed in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members; in our previous budget speech we outlined key projects which will be completed in the next three years.

We are proud to announce that these capital projects, which are essential in the economic growth of this province, are making progress and we are convinced they will be finished on time.

#### Among them, worthy to be highlighted are:

- **Main road P496 (John Ross Highway):** This 15.7 kilometre road is located between Richards Bay and eMpangeni under uThungulu District. We committed in our previous budget speech that this dual carriageway will be completed in this financial year. Today, I can confirm that this road has finally been completed.
- **Main road P700:** This 83 kilometre long road is located between eMpangeni and uLundi, between Zululand district and uThungulu district. We are also pleased that construction of 58.5 kilometres has already been completed. We will now continue with construction of the remaining 24.5 kilometres of this road in the MTEF period.
- **Main road P230:** This road is located between Empangeni and Eshowe under uThungulu district. In the previous budget speech we reported that 18 kilometres of this 31.3 kilometre long road has been constructed. Today, we are pleased to announce progress as 25 kilometres has now been upgraded. The last 6.3 kilometres is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2015.
- **Main road P435:** This road is located from Skhemele to Indumo under uMkhanyakude. At least 7.3 kilometres of this 17.3 kilometre road has been constructed. In this financial year, we are going to be upgrading the next 10 kilometres.
- **Main road P68:** This 49 kilometres-long road stretches from St. Faiths to iXopo. The construction of this road is progressing well with the last six (6) kilometres to be upgraded in this financial year.
- **D168:** This 13.5 kilometre road is located between Highflats and Nhlangwini in the Harry Gwala District municipality is progressing well with eight (8) kilometres completed. Currently construction is taking place on the last 5.5 kilometres.
- **Main road P36/2:** is located between Nquthu and

**R6.8 billion of the total budget of R9.3 billion to be invested in transport infrastructure.**

Nondweni under uMzinyathi District. Already 17.5 kilometres of this 24 kilometres long road has been completed. Currently 2.5 kilometres are under construction and the remaining 4 kilometres will be completed by the end of 2016.

### UMzimkhulu infrastructure projects

Madam Speaker, the government of KwaZulu-Natal continues to pay attention to developing the small town of uMzimkhulu in the Harry Gwala District Municipality.

Since the re-demarcation of uMzimkhulu to KwaZulu-Natal, progress has been made to improve service delivery. The Department of Transport has since 2007 invested more than R700 million upgrading the existing infrastructure and construction of new roads infrastructure in the town.

These include the construction of main road P749, main road P601, main road P602, main road P416 and main road P417. Part of the uMzimkhulu development also includes the construction of Memeza/ eNgunjini, Ibisi and Gungununu river bridges.

### New infrastructure projects

Madam Speaker, beyond the projects that are currently under construction, we have also witnessed progress in many infrastructure upgrades that we have started in the past few financial years. These include, among others:

- Main road P16 between Kranskop and eQhudeneni;
- P711 between KwaMaphumulo and Glendale,
- D883 from eNdulinde to Samungu, linking iLembe and uThungulu, as well as
- D1867 from Belgrade to Orangedaal, which will link to P217 and shorten the distance from Pongola to eDumbe, just to mention by a few.

The reality Madam Speaker is that the backlog remains huge, mainly in rural communities.

***Kodwa kunjalo, Siyaqhuba, Siyasebenza! We are a province at work.***

### Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant

The Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant allocation of R1.8 billion is in respect of maintenance and construction of roads infrastructure in KwaZulu-Natal.

A portion of the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant of R85.3 million in 2015/16 has been ring-fenced for repairing roads damaged by disasters in the province. This grant will see a serious reduction in the next three years as a result of fiscal consolidation and cuts on the grant, and the transfer of money to SANRAL for the construction of Moloto road.

### Potholes Strategy

Madam Speaker, we have worked hard over the past financial years to improve our response in addressing the challenge of pothole patching. The rehabilitation of aging roads infrastructure will require more investment.

We have also embarked on the process of appointing a panel of contractors in Grade 2 to 6 from Construction Industry



Development Board's register.

These contractors will be located in district municipalities for urgent identification of a pothole and to speed up the response time. A pilot project is currently being rolled out in eThekweni in this regard.

Our plans entail auditing provincial roads that require rehabilitation, which will guide how we channel resources and in the process minimise litigation because of potholes.

### Roads Naming and Renaming Legacy Project

Madam Speaker, we are pleased to announce that we have finalised the concept document and have now developed the implementation plan for the Roads Naming and Renaming Legacy Project. This initiative seeks to give identity and meaning to all the existing roads infrastructure.

We will soon table our proposed approach on this project before the Provincial Executive Council and share with this House the process moving forward. Our wish is to launch this project in September 2015, so it can coincide with the heritage month.

### Public Transport Infrastructure Development

Our government takes pride in the progress being made in improving public transport. The concept of integration is becoming common in all areas of transportation planning.

Working with municipalities, we have completed the development of 10 Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network (IRPTN)/ Integrated Public Transport Network (IPTN) in the province. We are left with Harry Gwala District Municipality, which is expected to be completed in this financial year.

Progress has been made in the intermodal facilities in KwaDukuza and Port Shepstone, with designs completed and handed over to the two municipalities.

In Port Shepstone the municipality has gone out to tender for the construction and they are now in the process of appointing a suitable service provider.

KwaDukuza is expected to go out on tender within the next few months. Designs have also been completed in uMzimkhulu for a modern public transport facility, and environmental approval and tender processes will then ensue.

Working with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, we have invested resources to continue with the construction of KwaMaphumulo and Weenen public transport facilities.

We are pleased to announce that the R76 million public transport facility in eMtshezi, will be completed by November this year.

In the past six years we have also constructed 170 public transport shelters across the province. In the next five years, we plan to construct three new public transport facilities.

**Ulundi, Mondlo, uMtshezi, KwaDukuza, Port Shepstone and Maphumulo among beneficiaries of intermodal facilities.**

## Programme 3: Transport Operations

This programme focuses on planning, regulation and facilitates the provision of integrated land transport services through co-ordination and co-operation with national planning authorities.

It also works with community based organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to enhance the mobility of all communities, especially those without or with limited access. We also implement road safety education and awareness programmes. We have allocated a total R1.4 billion towards Transport Operations.

### Public Transport Stability

Madam Speaker; notwithstanding some challenges in dealing with public transport conflict, great progress has already been made. We make the emphasis that only a few taxi associations – out of 246 – where there are challenges.

These challenges have been isolated and are being dealt with to achieve lasting peace and stability. Recently we have signed Co-operation Agreements with affected associations to ensure that all operations are legalised and establish clean governance structures.

These include ensuring respect for the rule of law, getting associations to fix their finances and administration, introducing rank management systems, and regulate operations of the security industry with the aim of eradicate hit men, otherwise known as “izinkabi”.

Moreover, the department will establish a Public Transport Compliance, Inspection and Monitoring Team to ensure safety of passengers and operators.

Working with municipalities, we will ensure industry stability in affected areas by strengthening security in taxi ranks by enrolling the services of private security companies. Contracted security companies will manage access control and monitor compliance within taxi ranks. They will link up with the law enforcement agencies of both the department and municipalities and work proactively to prevent conflict. This initiative will soon be implemented in Port Shepstone and be rolled out in other hot spot areas.

The department will also strengthen internal and district municipality capacity to improve compliance within associations and speedily respond to public transport conflict.

Recently, we have been mediating in taxi conflicts in the taxi associations in KwaDukuza and Maphumulo Taxi Associations; Mandeni/ Sundumbili and Nyoni Taxi Associations; Greater Newcastle; Port Shepstone; and Ulundi/ Mahlabathini Taxi Association. In KwaDukuza-Maphumulo taxi conflict, 21 suspects have been arrested as part of our conflict resolution.

Judging from the progress made thus far we believe that it is possible to achieve peace and stability through dialogue and working well with the SANTACO.

We wish to once again call on all taxi operators to co-operate with law enforcement agencies to ensure that all those who use violence to run the industry are isolated and removed from working in the industry. We want this industry to run professionally like all businesses so it can realise sustained growth.

***Siyaqhuba, siyasebenza ukuletha ukuthula KwaZulu-Natal.***

## Learner Transport

The department will continue to provide learner transport services in the province within the allocated R185.9 million budget in 2015/16. From this budget, we will provide scholar transport to 21 760 learners attending 226 schools throughout the province.

It is important for the public to know that, as per national policy, we are prioritising schools in the rural areas, where learners walk more than three kilometres to school.

In a needs assessment that we conducted for scholar transport, we found that we would need close to R5 billion to ensure that all scholars have learner transport.

The safety of our learners should be our collective responsibility as government and as parents. I wish to reiterate the call to parents to ensure that their children travel in safe modes of transport.

In terms of Shovakalula, our bicycle distribution programme for learners, we will continue to distribute them to those in need. In the past five years, we distributed 12 305 bicycles to learners in mostly rural areas, which we will grow to 15 000 in the next five years.

## Subsidised Bus Services and Integrated Public Transport Plans

Honourable members; the department consistently over-spends against this allocation due to the under-funding of the Public Transport Operations Grant (PTOG), as well as the increase in fuel and labour costs, which have resulted in higher than anticipated claims in respect of bus subsidies.

The PTOG is a Schedule 4 or supplementary grant, and provinces are expected to supplement the funding from the equitable share. In view of the financial cut-backs facing the province, as well as the confirmation from National Treasury that no additional funding will be forthcoming, the department had to reprioritise from the infrastructure maintenance and construction budget to fund the pressures. In the next five years, the focus on this programme will be to achieve accelerated progress on transformation – as already spelt out above.

## Programme 4: Transport Regulation

The provision of a safe road environment through the regulation of traffic on public infrastructure, law enforcement and the registration and licensing of vehicles and drivers, remains critical. That is why we have allocated R760 million towards achieving these objectives.

Honourable Members, I am pleased to report the department has begun to decentralise the Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) offices. Services are now taken to districts as opposed to only at Head Office in Pietermaritzburg as was previously the case.

In October last year, we officially launched two offices, one in Empangeni and another in Ladysmith and these have made a marked, positive impact in the lives of operators. Logistics are advanced to open other centres in Port Shepstone and Jozini during this financial year. With these licensing centres, we are really taking government services closer to where the people are.

## Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI)

Honourable members; traffic police visibility on our roads plays a critical role in preventing accidents. We will continue to recruit and train more law enforcement officers over the current Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The 90 trainees who are currently undergoing training at the Traffic Training College are due to complete in June this year. All of this is aimed at beefing up law enforcement visibility on our roads to ensure that road users adhere strictly to traffic regulations and prevent road accidents.

Today I am also pleased to announce that the RTI will soon pilot the online booking for learner and driver licence tests. The system will minimise the backlog currently being experienced at Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTC). This project will be piloted in uMkhondeni testing station. Notably, the uMsunduzi municipality has recently opened its own DLTC, which will also assist in providing services to citizens.

## Regulation of Driving Schools

Last October, we officially unveiled the Driving Schools and Instructors Regulating Framework, which will serve as an enforcement tool for the driving school operators and instructors.

The department has effectively established an office which will look after the matters of the Driving Schools Industry, including registration and administration. The framework aims to transform the Driving Schools Industry into an organised sector. This will go a long way in addressing fraud and corruption that has been reported in many of our testing centres.

We have already started our formalisation roll-out programme where we register driving schools and instructors in district municipalities.

Madam Speaker; we are also in the process of establishing the Accident and Reconstruction Unit. The Road Traffic Management Corporation has transferred funding to establish and train a specialised accident investigation and reconstruction unit.

The department is currently evaluating the tender for the Traffic Contravention Management system.

Notwithstanding some challenges in traffic law enforcement, RTI has always demonstrated dedication and selflessness in the execution of its duties. It is now recognised as one of the best provincial traffic authorities in the country.

As the department responsible, we have therefore developed the KwaZulu-Natal Traffic Police Awards in order to identify and reward service excellence on an annual basis. We held the first awards ceremony last month, which were a great success. Our objectives here are to enhance and recognise the performance of provincial traffic officers in KwaZulu-Natal, motivate individuals and teams and promote the regeneration of high morals, standards and values in the traffic safety management fraternity.

## Motor Licensing

Honourable Members, we will continue to fight for the eradication of fraud and corruption at our driver and learner

An online booking system for learner and driver licences to increase efficiencies is being piloted.

driver licensing and testing centres.

The majority of the department's revenue is derived from motor vehicle licences collected in terms of the National Road Traffic Act. There has been steady annual growth that can be attributed to the growth in the vehicle population, now at 1.5 million vehicles, as well as the renewal of motor vehicle licences.

Over the MTEF period, the growth averages 4 percent as the department is concerned with the reduction in revenue due to cheaper fees from neighbouring provinces.

In terms of the new provincial Motor Vehicle Licence Numbering System, Honourable Members would recall that our process was halted so we could align to the national process of introducing a new number plate system. It is noteworthy that the Provincial Executive has, meanwhile, approved our proposed change in the Numbering System. Furthermore, the Executive agreed that the Provincial Coat of Arms would be used and that the "ZN" licence mark would suffix vehicle licence number plates. We will appraise this House on the developments regarding the national vehicle licence numbering system once legislation has been finalised, and its impact on our plan.

## Programme 5: Empowerment programmes

In this programme, our department directs and manages the implementation of programmes and strategies that lead to the development and empowerment of communities and contractors.

We wish to once again express support to Cabinet's decision to transfer the EPWP Provincial Coordination function to the Provincial Department of Public Works. It is our shared view that this transition will bring better alignment to national structures. Funds will accordingly be transferred to Public Works over the MTEF to support the move.

**We plan to create 41 000 job opportunities through our Zibambele Roads Maintenance programme.**

Our department's contribution to job creation and poverty alleviation will continue to reflect our EPWP and Zibambele Roads Maintenance programmes, respectively, because they focus on

youth and women empowerment. We achieved our target in respect of Zibambele of creating 41 000 employment opportunities against a target of 40 000. We aim to maintain this performance, of 41 000, in the next five years in view of budgetary constraints.

The department committed itself to working together with the Vukuzakhe Emerging Contractors Association (VECA) to fast-track the development of emerging contractors through the provision of training and development support, thus the allocation of R5 million in 2015/16.

We estimate that more than R2 billion-worth of contracts will go to emerging entrepreneurs in this financial year. In the next five years, a total of 1 766 contracts will go to emerging entrepreneurs. Of the total spend, at least R343 million-worth of contracts will be awarded to Vukuzakhe contractors who are on Grades 1 to 3. We will also direct an investment of R42 million on the public transport transformation contract to emerging business.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, Honourable Members; allow me to thank the African National Congress for providing me with political guidance in the positions of responsibility it has given to me.

To the Honourable Premier, my brother and comrade Senzo Mchunu, thank you for the confidence you continuously show in me – especially in relation to leading the Transport as well as Community Safety and Liaison portfolios. The Portfolio Committee on Transport, our broader transport stakeholders, the management led by the Head of Department, Sibusiso Gumbi, and the Office of the MEC, I thank you for the support.

Last but not least a big thank you to my wife (uMaNkosi) and my family for continued support.

We all should remain guided by the words of Oliver Reginald Tambo, the late former President of the African National Congress, who said:

*"Whilst our policies were in terms of our beliefs and convictions, they also reflected and served the people's interests. Above all, we sought to make the people part and parcel of our decisions."*

I ask this House to approve this investment in the accelerated socio-economic development and growth of our people to the tune of **R9.3 billion** for the 2015/16 financial year.

I thank you.





**transport**

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