



transport

Department:
Transport
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,
MR MKHULEKO HLENGWA, MP, AT THE TRANSPORT BUDGET VOTE
IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, 29 JULY 2024.**

Honourable Chairperson

Minister of Transport, Ms Barbara Creecy

Chairperson of the Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and
Administration, Public Works and Infrastructure, Mr Frederik Badenhorst

Delegates representing provincial departments

Fellow South Africans

Honourable Members

It is certainly important to note that while our roads account for **88%** of all freight, these roads also account for **98%** of all person trips.

The latter, that is the transportation of persons, certainly raises important questions about the quality and safety of public transport across our road infrastructure.

This leads one to conclude that even while human factors play a primary role in crashes and followed by vehicle factors, the quality of roads can still not be ignored.

This is critically important to note regarding the quality of our roads and I thus believe in the continuous improvement of the quality of our roads, which will always have a directly positive effect on safety.

State of vehicles

We are however also aware that while government addresses road quality through new construction, upgrades or maintenance projects, road users must equally be responsible for their own safety and the safety of others on the road.

This thus extends responsibility also to the road user by addressing road safety also as a function of safer vehicles on our roads.

Chairperson,

Approximately 10% of vehicles registered in South Africa are not road worthy and the average age of these vehicles is 11 years which also contributes to increased potential of crashes and fatalities.

Furthermore, it has been estimated that around 40% of vehicles on our roads are not insured.

This is most disturbingly also a challenge we see in even in the transportation of children as learners through the use of dubious and unsafe vehicles, especially in rural areas.

The safety of learners transported particularly in privately arranged learner transport is therefore a great concern and can be more effectively addressed

by expanding subsidised learner transport, which is managed by government and has had fewer reported incidents and accidents.

Funding for learner transport remains the main issue raised by provinces, which hinders the full implementation of transport services to cover all learners who require transportation to schools.

The integration of learner transport and the closure/rationalization of schools have led to learners walking long distances to school, increasing the demand for learner transport. This issue is more prevalent in rural provinces and schools.

There is therefore a need for a dedicated learner transport system for the purpose of planning, monitoring, and reporting, especially in rural provinces.

The Department will engage National Treasury and the Department of Basic Education to explore the feasibility of creating a conditional grant to cater for the learners that are not included in the National Learner Transport Programme.

With its challenges, we have made progress with the National Learner Transport Policy, which was approved by Cabinet in 2015. This policy, developed by the Department of Transport in close collaboration with the Department of Basic Education, led to the establishment of the National Inter-Departmental Committee.

This committee is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the National Learner Transport Programme and Policy.

To this end, we have established a national inter-departmental committee comprising representatives from both the Departments of Transport and

Basic Education at national and provincial levels. The mandate of this committee is to oversee the implementation of the learner transport programme and to report directly to the Ministers of Transport and Basic Education.

I am proud to report that there has been a steady improvement in the performance of the learner transport programme. In 2019, over **557,000** learners were being transported, and by 2023, this number had increased to **706,000** learners across **4,204** schools nationally.

This significant achievement has been supported by a budget of **R4.9 billion**.

Road Safety and Road User Behavior

Honourable members, Irresponsible driver behavior has been noted as the major contributor to road crashes, with distracted driving, drunken driving; over speeding; and non-compliance with the rules of the road playing a major role.

Research has proven that changing road user behavior is central to making our roads safer. In fact, statistics have indicated that up to 87 percent of all road fatalities in the country can be attributed to road user behavior compelling us towards a programme of behavior change across the road sector.

Given our populous and expanding urban settlements, we will commit ourselves to fight pedestrian deaths which are the highest segment of victims in the country.

It is with profound sadness that we acknowledge the tragic accident that occurred in Fochville, Gauteng. On behalf of the department, the Minister,

and myself, we extended our heartfelt condolences to the families of the twelve individuals who lost their lives.

In response to this tragedy, the Department dispatched a team of crash scene investigators from the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) to thoroughly investigate the circumstances surrounding the crash.

Preliminary findings suggest that the crash was caused by an alleged reckless driver whose actions have taken the lives of so many people. He is currently undergoing the country's legal process.

We are closely monitoring the case and hope for a conviction that will send a strong message to all reckless road users.

Introducing 24/7 shift system

As mentioned by the Minister, we speed up resolution of factors affecting the 24/7 shift solution to safety of our roads.

Towards effective implementation of our road safety strategy and towards strengthening overall capacities of the RTMC we allocated R196, 991 million in 2024/25 and R204,264 million in 2025/26.

Safe and Accessible Public Transport

As we take these actions meant to improve the safety of public transport, we will equally also commit to ensuring its accessibility to all by guaranteeing that the department and the sector adhere to a requirement for the universal accessibility of public transport.

This Constitutional requirement will be strengthened for a much effective response to the basic transport needs of persons with disabilities.

My office will support the implementation of the department's action plan, suitably titled 'Accessible Transport for All' which is an outcome of the recent Summit on Universal Accessibility hosted by the department.

Delivering on this action plan will require collaboration across the transport sector.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the department will embark on roadshows across provinces to take these commitments and resolutions further with our transport operators and consult with passengers with disabilities to ensure tangible inclusion.

IPTN review

The review conducted by the Department of Transport in cities in 2023/24 on Integrated Public Transport Network (IPTN) implementation programmes, identifies the need for more specialised skills at the city level and recommends stricter controls over wasteful and irregular spending of Public Transport Network Grant funds.

Cities have been put on notice to improve in this regard and to remove bottlenecks to increasing ridership while reducing costs.

With the 2024/25 **R7.5 billion** allocation under the Public Transport Network Grant, we are going to insist on better implementation performance in this regard.

We will also strongly discourage operational delays, and mismanagement.

Honourable Members and Provincial delegates,

We have noted the suspension of three cities, Buffalo City, Mbombela, and Msunduzi municipalities, which were suspended for three years from the Public Transport Network Grant and will encourage the department to continue to engage these cities to ensure compliance with the readmission criteria jointly set by the Department and the National Treasury.

Out of the three suspended cities, Msunduzi municipality is the only city partially readmitted to the PTNG in 2024/25, with strict conditions and milestones, with the following allocations over the MTEF: **R50m** in 2024/25, **R100m** in 2025/26, and **R150m** in 2026/27. The Department will monitor the city in 2024/25.

Such work and the resources expended must ultimately serve to sustain the needed development and expansion of integrated public transport.

My office in cooperation with that of the Minister and the entire department will certainly ensure that we carry out our mandate and commitments of this medium term with eye to improving people's standards of living through an efficient, safe and accessible transport system.

Thank you.