

# A tale of misaligned tracks?

By Thamsanqa Mabhena MP – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Transport

Ngiyathokoza Sihlalo,

An efficient and inexpensive transportation system contributes to greater competition in the marketplace, greater economies of scale in production and reduced prices of goods, mobility of people and moves services in an economy. Ideally Transport should be a key economic driver in any self-respecting emerging economy and such an entity is characterized by good and decisive leadership, coordination, planning, monitoring and implementation. However, our Department of Transport fails dismally at this basic concept.

Chairperson, a reallocation of R29 million towards masks and sanitisation for the taxi industry is welcome. However, the big elephant in the room is the project management fees to be paid to the implementing agent.

Chairperson, the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant (PRMG) meant to maintain existing roads and build new roads in some of the poorest provinces is reduced by R1 755 840 billion, this is despite the fact that some of these provincial roads are really in a terrible condition.

Again Chairperson, another casualty due to ANC incompetence is the Public Transport Network Grant (PTNG) which saw a reduction of R1 902 275 billion, and the inconceivable reason provided by the Department is that there were *“delays in planned construction projects”*. This, however, is not true. The real reason is that some of these municipalities were allocated these funds despite the fact that they had no sound or plausible plans on how they would spend and implement these critical projects. Again, lack of coordination and sheer incompetence.

Chairperson, a tale of misaligned tracks is busy unfolding at PRASA, where “cadres” looted PRASA to a point where they can’t even secure their own infrastructure, and this poses a grave danger to the operations of the entity. They can’t even guarantee the safety of their own commuters. At the centre of it all are the High Court disputed security contracts by benefactors of comrades. PRASA has all but collapsed and remains a risk to the fiscus.

Chairperson, in conclusion, Government should unbundle PRASA and allow provinces and cities such as the well-run City of Cape Town to take charge of some operations, because currently it is just a tale of misaligned tracks. Coordinate, monitor and impose stringent qualifying criteria for the allocation of PTNGs to municipalities. Scrap the Gauteng Improvement Project because it is busy bankrupting SANRAL and its credit rating is deteriorating.

Lastly, the Moloto Railway Corridor remains a pipe dream. The ANC government lied to Mpumalanga voters.

Ngiyathokoza.